

Number 59 April 1976

25P

ZIGZAG

THE ROCK MAGAZINE



Gram Parsons
Kaleidoscope

10cc

James Burton
Country Joe
Nick Kent

TOOTS & THE MAYTALS REGGAE GOT SOUL

NEW SINGLE AND ALBUM
AVAILABLE NOW



ZIGZAG 59

April 1976

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Yes, it's another issue of Zigzag, "the mother and father of British rock fanzines", not to mention "the grand daddy of the rock zine" as we are known to the Melody Maker (that well known uncle and auntie of the pop weeklies).

It seems that our glossy covers are less than popular with hardcore earlyday Zigzaggers. Frankly, I can't see the objection.... I kind of like 'em myself, besides which they are (for some reason known only to Mr WH Smith and his friends) a necessity for retail purposes. This month's is a wild departure from traditional ZZ-style covers and is bound to raise a few murmurs of complaint - but don't forget the immortal words of Mr Diddle, "you can't just a book by looking at the cover".

To kick off this issue, Tobler hurtled off to Oxford to interview IO CC, who misinterpreted his brain impediment as insolence. Marginally avoiding severe damage from a well aimed Lol Creme kick to the fork, Tobler managed to escape unscathed and, in fact, was so impressed with their performance that he found himself humming "I'm not in love" all the way home - to the accompaniment of the empty beer bottles clanking around the floor of his Vauxhall.

Tobler also scooped the jellybowl by being the only journalist to secure an interview with that silent type, JAMES BURTON. Not that Burton said an awful lot, since he does most of his talking through his Tele - but Tobler, paid by the column inch, skilfully eked it out to four pages.

The famous Mac Garry, in the latest phase of his plan "to take over the whole magazine", prods around with the last song GRAM PARSONS ever wrote, uncovering the story underneath "In my hour of darkness", and through the dextrous use of his perverted and convoluted brain cell, somehow manages to bring both Robin Ray and Frank Bough into his interminable saga on the rise and dissolution of KALEIDOSCOPE. Bored readers will be ecstatic to learn that this series definitely concludes in the next issue, after which Garry threatens to return to sea.

The last half of his NICK KENT interview has been heavily edited and censored - to keep us out of the law courts, and to prevent Kent's mutilated and knife-rent remains from being discovered in some back alley south of Soho.

Newcomer Brian Long contributes a discography on JOE MacDONALD, and apart from "Over the garden wall" and the return of Tobler's "Stuff and Nonsense", we have some record reviews. Editorially, we remain in disagreement over the value of reviews, but the majority (in terms of physical weight) rules, so they're back.

I would remind you that all enquiries regarding back issues and subscriptions should be sent to Sue at Prestagate, 10 Kennet Street Reading Berks, and correspondence on editorial matters should come to Yeoman Cottage - with a s.a.e. if you want an answer.

And now, back to the book.

Pete



Abbreviations:

GG... Graham Gouldman
LC... Lol Creme
ES... Eric Stewart
KG... Kevin Godley
HL... Harvey Lisburg (manager)

ZZ: Do you feel in any way schizophrenic about doing 'Top of the Pops' and also doing enormous tours which are obviously attracting a different sort of audience?

LC: No, it's all part of the same job... everyone's entitled to hear us - we're not going to deny people. We aren't snobs, you know.

ZZ: Yes, but some people might suspect that the fact you're on Phonogram is probably the reason why the Hotlegs album isn't being re-released when there's obviously a market for it.

GG: What has one thing got to do with the other?

LC: We play to everybody, regardless of age or musical taste.

GG: Are you implying we've put a ban on the Hotlegs album?

ZZ: That's how it looks... it's a very much in demand album.

GG: Is it really? We didn't even know that.

ZZ: So are all the other things - like the Graham Gouldman singles on CBS, and Frabjoy & Runcible...

LC: I think that's interesting; I know that in America, people are into the history of music... it must be a growing thing, because it never used to be that way.

GG: There's one guy, called Keith, who works in a warehouse, and he's got copies of everything that any of us have ever done in our lives - a collection that none of us would have. But in America, it seems like you get someone like that at every gig.

ZZ: Presumably you have no plans to release any of that old stuff again?

LC: We wouldn't initiate its release, no - but I don't know about record companies... they might want to.

GG: There's nothing to be ashamed of.

HL: If we ever did a 'History of 10cc', we'd use all that. We'd get all the tapes - but we'd make sure that people were aware it wasn't actually 10cc. We'd do that, if ever the time was ripe.

ZZ: How do you choose your singles?

LC: We didn't choose 'Art for art's sake'.

GG: Up to now, we've always chosen the singles ourselves, or else we've agreed with Jonathan (King) when he suggested a certain track... but we have usually come up with the idea. It was like that with 'Minestrone' and 'I'm not in love', but with this album we hadn't thought about singles at all. In fact, we were talking about not releasing a single, because nothing really stuck out that much - but then Phonogram came up with the idea, and we thought we'd give it a try.

LC: They wanted a single out in America to coincide with the tour, and to follow up 'I'm not in love' as quickly as possible, because there'd been too long a delay anyway. They thought 'Art for art's sake' was a good idea, so they released it there, and then Phonogram in England released it here. We just went along with it, thinking we'd give them the opportunity to make that sort of decision - and in fact they were wrong in America... it didn't happen there, but it did happen here. If it had been up to us, I doubt if we'd have put it



find themselves subjected to the somewhat dubious pleasure of a Tobler interview

out.
KG: You leave the business to business people. We're not ashamed of any track we've recorded, so it wouldn't be a case of 'we don't want that out as a single'. There's no problem as far as we're concerned, because we're proud of the music, every single track.

ZZ: I suppose the two on 'The Original Soundtrack' were much more obviously singles...

LC: We saw them as singles, in that particular order. We saw 'Mine-strone' as a good comeback, after a long period of silence, after 'Silly Love', and we thought that would get things bubbling again. Then we decided to put out 'I'm not in love', which we thought would either be a hit or a resounding flop.

GG: Phonogram said that as well, so we were all agreed, which was very nice, whereas with 'Art for art's sake', we weren't so sure - and we were very surprised that it's done so well.

LC: In fact we were totally amazed! ZZ: There's been some conjecture as to exactly what the two people on the sleeve of 'How dare you' are saying...

LC: We're not telling you.

ZZ: Do you know what they're say-

ing?

LC: Of course we do.

KG: We told them what to say.

LC: But we're not telling you! We told the exact opposite to the last people we asked.

ZZ: How are you doing in America? As well as here?

LC: We're just at the start of our career in America.

ZZ: It's a cult following at present?

KG: No, it's more than that now.

LC: It was, until we did the first headline tour, which we've just come back from. I think the whole thing's under way now, because the gigs were so successful - touch wood.... I think we've made the break.

HL: We're eighteen months behind, in a parallel path.

ZZ: Was it anything to do with the fact that UK Records didn't really have any American representation, whereas Phonogram obviously does?

GG: It had everything to do with it.

HL: They lost 'Wall Street Shuffle', and that took some doing.

LC: They lost 'Rubber Bullets' - that took a lot of doing too!

HL: We had 5 top five records here, and they didn't have one.

ZZ: Didn't you have some regrets about leaving Jonathan King after he had shown that initial faith?

Patrick Lichfield



LC: There were certain regrets, er, socially, almost, because we like Jonathan - even though he's a bum and a punk and tight - but we love him, because he's one of those very likeable people... but regrets as far as our career went, there were none.

ZZ: I suspect that you like Jonathan because he basically makes the same sort of records -

LC: Oh no he bloody doesn't!

ZZ: He obviously doesn't take as much care as you, but -

LC: He's not a serious musician... he's in it purely and simply for the money - so we're poles apart, we really are. You can't honestly say that his records are a really honest effort to improve music, whereas we feel ours are.

ZZ: Perhaps that's true, but how many records are a conscious effort to improve music?

LC: Not many - but you still can't say that Jonathan makes similar records to us. His motives are different and his music is different. I think you'd better explain yourself, mate. I think you're on thin ice. Do you want to go now?

ZZ: No, I want to go on arguing!

LC: A ten minute argument, or a

fifteen?

ZZ: I can't afford the fifteen! Both his records and yours appeal to me; his because of the cheek of them to a great extent, and yours certainly have that going for them. Jonathan doesn't write verbal amusements like yours, but when he can come on 'Top Of The Pops' with a bunch of gorillas as backing vocalists - I suspect that comes from the same place as some of your lyrics.

LC: Do you mean he's got a sort of zany streak? We've both got that, but that's as far as any parallel could possibly go.

KG: He puts out records to make money, and we put out records to make money! It's totally different!

HL: You're entitled to compare anything to anything, but it's a surprising comparison!

ZZ: I think you were tied together in the early days because you were the only successful acts on UK... my apologies - I take it all back. GG: I think it's fair to say that we're poles apart musically, and our motives are different, and our sensibilities are light years away.

At this point, as if silently voicing some kind of protest, my tape record-

er jammed. The interviewees claimed that it was because I'd been comparing them with Jonathan, and even the tape recorder knew that was rubbish. However, with a few well chosen blows, I got it going again shortly afterwards.

GG: One guy we met had written out all the words from 'The Original Soundtrack', and had transcribed all the chords as well. I don't know how long it took him to do it, but it was amazing that somebody could spend all that time on it.

ZZ: How is it that your name was spelt wrong on the first album?

GG: I don't know.

KG: The person that did it is still looking for a job!

GG: It was corrected afterwards - but even in the lyric sheets of 'How Dare You?' there are mistakes... there's a writing credit wrong as well.

ZZ: How do you use this writing-together facility? Is it pure chance, or does one of you start with an idea and select one of the others to complete it?

GG: We usually start off in two pairs; Eric and myself, and Kev and Lol... Those are the sort of 'name' writing teams - but later on, after writing 3 or 4 songs, we feel like a change and switch around... we start talking to someone else about an idea - it's quite casual.

ZZ: Nobody else seems to do it like you do.

ES: There isn't another group in the whole world with four good writers.

LC: There are groups where everyone insists on writing - so that they all get a share of the money... and what happens is that you get an album with two good tracks on it, and the rest is an excuse. But it depends on what you're in it for - if you want the standard of the album to be great, then you own up and say 'alright, I'm not a good writer'. I mean, it's happened with us; we've written songs and said 'it's OK, but I think we could do better'... and we've all worked on it, rather than being possessive about it.

ZZ: Do you discard a lot?

LC: In the writing of a track, about 98% of it gets slung in the bin.

GG: Or will recur in another song - not maybe as a verse, but it does happen a lot.

LC: There's a lot of owning up takes place when we write - till everything is absolutely right.

ZZ: Do you sit down and say 'Right, now it's time for some writing'? Do you leave your homes?

LC: We've only ever done that once. For this album, Kevin and I went to France to write, but usually we go into the studio, lock ourselves in, and that's a very good atmosphere for writing.

GG: We start at ten and carry on - otherwise we wouldn't do anything.

ZZ: So you can do it in that kind of organised manner?

GG: It's like doing a tour - you're booked for certain days at certain hours, and you go and do it.

LC: If you only wrote when you got blind inspiration, you might write 3 songs a year.

ES: If you worked on blind inspiration, you'd never get anything finished - because every song is about 2% inspiration and 98% graft. We don't organise ourselves so strictly, and say 'Monday 9 am, we are going to write', but by the time you've finished a tour you're ready to write....

you're ready to do something different - in the same way that you're ready to tour again after you've done an album. It works like that quite naturally all the way.

LC: So you can plan for that. Lots of ideas come while you're on the road, or anywhere - and those ideas are going to be the starts or middles of something.

ZZ: Do you ever think of going back to any of your old songs?

LC: Yes, he said, shaking his head. Actually, the title track of 'How dare you' is something that was written 3 or 4 years ago... it was an experiment that we tried, which somehow worked its way into that song.

GG: It also happened with the b-side of 'Donna'; that was based on a thing I'd done for Robbins Music... so yes, often bits and pieces from the past will come up and get used in some way or other.

LC: As a rule, we prefer to move forwards rather than backwards.

ZZ: Can you tell us a bit about your fifth member?

LC: Paul - Paul Burgess... he's fabulous. Very tall, and he's a drum fanatic, which is ideally suited to us. He just works with us on the road - doesn't work in the studio.

ZZ: Don't you want him to, or doesn't he want to?

LC: There's no need, because Kev's the drummer.

ZZ: Doesn't he feel left out?

KG: Well, he seems to be quite an easy-going bloke.

LC: When we go into the studio to record, it's not just playing the drums, it's learning something - and Kev's not going to learn anything by

having Paul play the drums. That's the way we approach our instruments in the studio - we learn by playing things we haven't played before... so there's very little point in Paul doing it. It sort of defeats the object.

GG: Paul's very valuable on the road because he also plays keyboards - but he's just absolutely happy to do what he does. He never expresses a desire to go into the studio. He loves being on the road.

LC: He's a specialist in his own field. I mean, you have concert pianists, virtuosos; he's a virtuoso of the drums and gets the chance to show it by coming on the road with us.

ZZ: Do you use backing tapes in the live show?

GG: As little as possible... there are little things like the siren in 'Rubber Bullets' and the voices in 'I'm not in love'.

ZZ: You don't use musical backing tracks?

GG: There's no point. For some reason, people are under the impression that we use a lot of tapes. We don't - and we still manage to get very close to the sound of the records... sometimes it's even better than the records, so people tell us.

And that's a solid cue for me to tell you that the interview finished there. At the time, I hadn't seen the band on stage, so many of the latter questions were asked in ignorance.

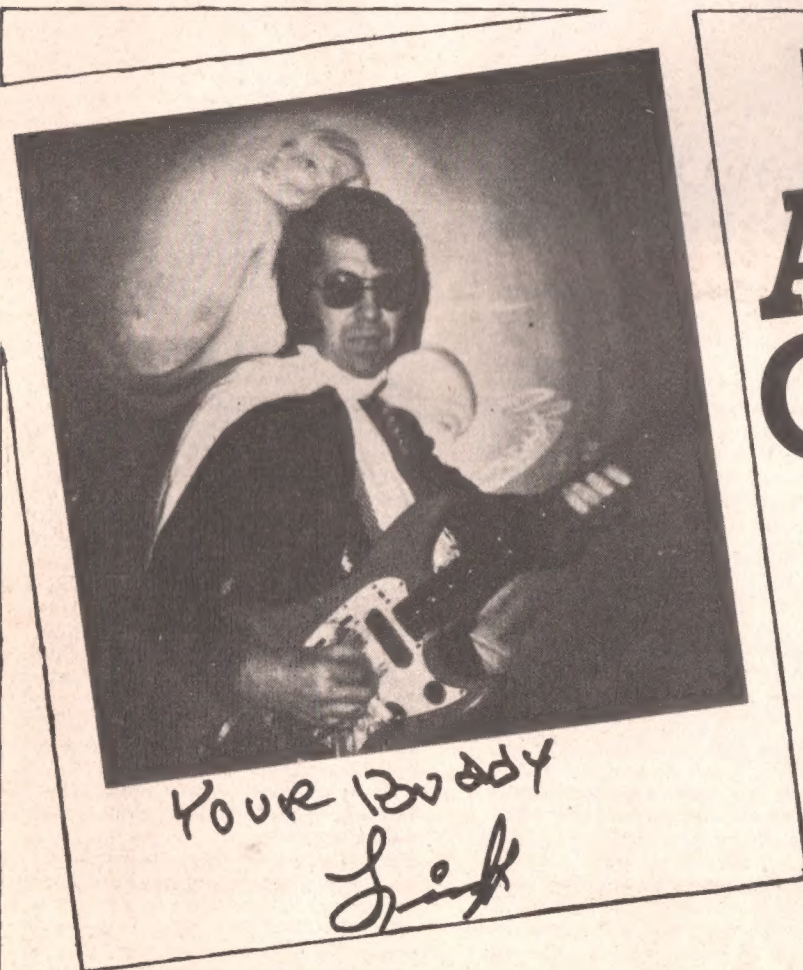
Now I have seen the IOcc live show, and of its type, it's absolutely the best I've ever seen. By that, I mean that with certain concerts, I go as much to watch the individual perform-

ers as the overall show - a good example being the recent Emmylou Harris gigs. But with a group like IOcc, I suppose I'm going in the first instance to see songs I enjoy on record played live, and to compare the two versions. Therefore the two concepts don't bear comparison.

IOcc, in probably 90% of their set, were a visual improvement on an aural delight. Their playing was a joy, and their singing was impeccable - and their use of lights, a lot of lights, was without equal in anything I've seen for some time. The immense care with which their show is put together is an object lesson to those who don't know how to use lighting effects, and an example to most of those who do. This great care extends further than just the staging of the show - after the gig, the stage door fans were carefully received, in groups of six, and every autograph hunter was satisfied. If you're interested, the group will give you an audience, despite having been on stage for around an hour and a half.

This is a group who deserve their success in every possible way. It was a delight to talk to them, and I'm hoping to do it again before long. Forget the carping in the weekly press - this is a very fine group, and just for a change, they're also British. Support them: if you can, and if you get the opportunity to see them on stage, don't miss it, or you'll undoubtedly regret it one day. Mark my words..... John

For the full historical details of the group, see Zigzag 44.



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NEW ALBUM

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UK RECORDS

OVER the GARDEN WALL

This is plainly quite ludicrous; the last issue only hit the streets on 12th March, and yet I have to prepare this column to be sent to the printers on March 18th - so obviously the results of the Journalists Poll will have to be published next month, thereby throwing us out of phase again... all very frustrating. It must be the price of progress or something. (More like our new publisher taking some kind of perverted pleasure in making us work to a strict curriculum). And for my pretty pictures this month, I have selected a series depicting life in North Marston.



Incidentally, speaking of the Journalists Poll, I am horrified to see that certain pricks among my readership are actually having the audacity to number me amongst their "least favourite" writers. Your addresses have been noted, and monstrous reprisals may follow (in the shape of Snafu albums, or tickets to see Druid)... so look out, you punks!



I was originally going to have to give up one page of my column so we could have a full page advert for the long promised Mike Wilhelm album. However, it's been delayed yet again... but it should definitely be ready by next month, and, if successful, could be the start of a series of Zigzag releases.... and boy do we have some goodies up our sleeves! My eyes water at the very thought of them! Anyway, the delay has saved you having to read my tedious review of the album, so be thankful for small mercies.



In fact, I tried to write a review of the McGarrigle Sisters album (which I hereby pronounce as The Famous Mac Garry 5 Star Album Of The Month... all those mandolins whirring and banjos spluttering and people engaged in spritely bouncing), but I let young Kendall ring its praises instead. He's got to get some practice, because he's just given up his job as manager of Earth Records in Aylesbury to become a full-time musician and writer. I'm sure he'll pick up a few tips under my tutelage, but his leaving the record shop does deprive me of a warm haven during my forays into town.

If you haven't already sent off for Bert Muirhead's record sale lists, what are you.... a brainless donkey? Although his manly physique defies the description, Bert is an angel in disguise, sent to warm the cockles of all Zigzag readers with his bargains.... and I mean BARGAINS. After snooping around remote warehouses and obscure wholesalers, he has put together the best (and cheapest) mail order service in the Empire. Where else can you get timeless jelly by such as Randy Burns & His Sky Dog Band, Brewer & Shipley, the Fifth Avenue Band, The Turtles, Mamas & Papas, Michael Nesmith.... all at less than a quid! And the service is speedy; Bert (noticing what a wreck Tobler has become as a result of years of drink drugs and sex) leads a straight and calvinistic existence which enables him to operate at Optimum Efficiency. To find out more, simply send a s.a.e. to Hot Wacks, 16 Almondbank Terrace, Edinburgh EH11 1SS.



The way Frame hacked up (he calls it "editing") my Nick Kent interview is shameful and scurrilous - and I am not amused. Listen, Frame, I submit my articles as set-pieces, and don't expect them to be cut to ribbons by ham-fisted twirpish editors frightened of repercussions. If you so much as chop one word from anymore of my articles, I'll go and write for Womans Weekly or something.... you fat pig. (That's the benefit of laying out my own column - I can be as rude as I wish, without fear of censorship).



Well known author, disc-jockey, athlete, aesthete and record company magnate Charlie Gillett, observing that the last issue of Zigzag was "immediately more engaging", sent a parcel of recent releases on his Oval Records label, together with a thinly disguised letter of hype such as some of the more imaginative press officers might string together. The records comprised singles by Tommy McLain and Pete Fowler, and the 'Mendocino' album (a well-worn test-pressing with hairs and evidence of last night's sardine supper on the surface - it's a good job I've already got a copy) by Sir Douglas Quintet.

Having nothing better to do whilst munching my Tesco-style bogus Alpen, I gave said discs a spin - and I almost came out of my chair when I heard

Pete Fowler singing 'One heart, one song'. I've never met Fowler, and since Charlie's blurb says he lives in Macclesfield it's not likely that he will have that pleasure, but his research (published in Rock File) is invaluable to lazy rock writers such as my good self - and he once wrote a great piece about the leading rock thug at his school (published in an ancient Jeff Cloves mag).... and the guy can sing and write songs too!

Pausing here

for a picture of Frame preparing my lunch, just to break up these long tracts of type, I understand from Charlie that Fowler's favourite singers are Emmylou and Gram - but I detect a stronger Gene Clark influence with my skilled ears. Released last October, the record has sold a lamentable 231 copies.... and razor-blade heir Gillett bleats: "Oval can't afford to make an album without income from the single. I don't know what we can do. Any ideas?"

Yes, mate, I have a great idea: shoot 80% of the disc jockeys on Radio One, and replace them with human beings. Without wishing to contribute to the ineffectual barrage of carping, I have got to say that Radio One not only STINKS of bad taste, stagnation, and moronic imbecility, it is also the most powerful and nauseating brainwasher this side of the Iron Curtain. I guess it's all down to cheapness; you can't get cheaper radio than providing some dimwitted dork with a pile of records (selected by "a panel of experts"), sitting him in front of a microphone and turntable, and letting him prattle about the first thing that comes into his empty head.



Getting a single on the Radio One playlist doesn't guarantee success (right now they're playing the shit out of 'Spanish Wine' - with no significant reflection in the charts), but not getting onto the playlist does guarantee failure. You name five singles that made the top ten without the benefit of Radio One hype... you can't! (Unless you count cretinous crude disco trash - and nobody with an IQ of over 4 counts that rubbish).

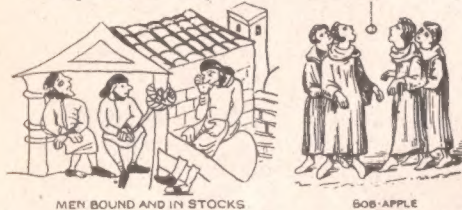
Whether they like it or not, the jokers on the Radio One panel have the power to make or break a single. The 231 persons of wealth and taste who purchased the Fowler single, probably read about it in Time Out, saw a curt review in NME, or heard it via John Peel or Charlie's own Honky Tonk show.

Mind you, Charlie is really up against it; I enquired of a record shop manager (an enlightened one.... the young Kendall), and he has never stocked an Oval Record or been asked for one. No-one out here in the provinces has ever heard of Oval Records.... and this is a hip town!

Which brings us on to the subject of The Great British Frole. The fact is, we at Zigzag don't know how lucky we are: we have the honour of being read by only the cream of the record buying public - and in the same way, Charlie's programme is listened to only by enthusiasts (and that includes me, since I discovered that by hooking the TV aerial into the pre-war Perdio, which seems to be the only receiving apparatus on the premises, I can just about get Radio London, beaming in as weak as sparrowfart signals over 50 miles of Sunday morning). To sell records, you've got to hit the sheep - it's the only way.

So, shooting all these twirps on Radio One wouldn't really solve any problems. The Great British Pranny worships Tommy Lumpkin and Dave O'Leary Tompkins (D.O.L.T.) and would resent their being shot as much as they'd go bonkers if 'Crossroads' were terminated.

Charlie, old bean, we have to face up to the fact that we are Catering For A Minority. And who would have it Any Other Way?



Right - that filled up a good lot of space.... now let's get back to the serious stuff - like, for instance, Uncle Mac's Photo Phun Time. To the right, you see a picture of the young and ebullient Michael Nesmith cavorting with that Forces Sweetheart Lulu, and his erstwhile chums Jones and Dolenz. What you have to do, gentle reader, is this: visualise what Mr Nesmith is thinking. The winner of the best printable answer will win an album of my choice.



Please send your entries along with your poll entries - which brings us neatly to THIS MONTH'S POLL. We are going to have two categories this month, since I have little better to do with my time than lie around in a drunken stupor collating your lists. The categories are as follows:

- Your Favourite Dead Rock Star. List your ten favourite dead people, in order of preference, but please remember this; it's no good if they merely sound dead or look dead, or even if they're nearly dead. To qualify, they must be certified dead and gone at the date of sending off your entry. I am anxious to see how the Buddy Hollys and Eddie Cochrans compare with the Duane Allmans and Jimi Hendrix in terms of popularity.
- The Ten People Who Should Retire From The Music Business. They can be musicians, singers, disc-jockeys, managers, writers, hangers on.... anyone remotely connected with pop music or show biz. Think hard before you submit your entries - this could be an interesting one.



During a recent cheap day excursion to the hub of the Empire, I came across "a famous rock writer" who, in real life, turned out to be vastly different from the truculently happy fellow one would expect from his writing, which I have read with interest for some years.

On the promise that his real identity would and will not be revealed, he agreed to contribute to our pages under the pseudonym of Ventin O'Spleen. Look out - he's a vulgar, foul-mouthed, miserable monster.

My journalist of the month award was almost won by Peter O'Brien for his latest issue of Omaha Rainbow, but along came Michael Watts smashing 3 page Melody Maker spread on fanzines, and pipped him to the post. Despite one glaring omission, Watts and his cohorts Jones and Brown, did an amazing research and compression job.... all the salient facts. But here am I, the very life-force behind the re-launch of Zigzag, and I didn't even get a mention! Eh bien, such is life.... some of us are meant to lurk in the shadows, toiling selflessly and without thanks, while lesser mortals hog the limelight like so many Des O'Connors. Did you

see that picture of Frame? He looked like a fucking garden gnome! And Tobler didn't look much better - but at least he didn't look as if he'd just drunk a bucket of plaster of paris.



A lot of people are writing in with suggestions (like "why don't you do something on Snafu - they've been ignored for....") or assertions (like "Edgar Broughton is a better drummer than Ronnie Lane - why don't you....") or assertions (like "Edgar Broughton is a better drummer than Ronnie Lane - why don't you...."). Now, much as I enjoy reading your letters, I'd be a lot happier if more of you would take the time to send in your poll entries - thereby making a direct contribution to the magazine. And if you want replies, please send a sae.

OK - out with the pens, and get those letters off to me.... I can't live without them. At this juncture, my poste restante address continues to be c/o Yeoman Cottage, North Marston, Buckingham MK18 3PH. See ya!
Your humble servant, Mac Garry.

BOZ SCAGGS SILK DEGREES



'Silk Degrees' Boz Scaggs CBS 81193

Few artists have Boz Scaggs' reputation of consistency in producing albums of such high musical content. A cult figure in The States, selling out concert appearances wherever he goes, Boz is about to break through here on the strength of his superlative new album. Surrounded by a band of well known thoroughbred professionals Boz Scaggs is here to stay.

TWO NOT TO MISS

In the sixties Laura Nyro was known as The White Lady of Soul and was credited with such songs as 'Up On The Roof'. At the high spot of her career in 1972 she suddenly became somewhat of a recluse. Until now. And the release of her first album for over 3 years. Many artists have recorded Laura's songs with great success and now she returns with a solo album to reinstate her as a formidable musical force. 'Smile': the distinctive fusion of gospel, blues and soul. Laura Nyro is back, at her best.

Laura Nyro Smile



'Smile' Laura Nyro CBS 81171

CBS Records & Tapes

CONCLUDING OUR CONVERSATION WITH "THE ENFANT TERRIBLE OF THE POP WEEKLIES"

NICK KENT

NK: I'm a mere rock writer.....just one of a number of people in a fairly minor league occupation.

ZZ: You say that, but don't you think the major contributory factor in the huge resurgence of NME was the way you and Charlie Murray established yourselves as personalities on a par with the stars?

NK: I suppose so, but I think it's a bit of a con, really. I was certainly into it though - making the big entries at concerts, signing autographs and so on... it was fun. I went out of my way to cultivate it - I make no bones about that - but then I felt I was in danger of becoming a self-parody. I mean, there are definitely various cults which have built up around rock writers; like I was reading a piece in the Village Voice which was discussing the cult which had developed around Jon Landau, Robert Christgau, Dave Marsh and Paul Nelson - they've become real personality writers, and I just wonder how beneficial that sort of thing is to the art of rock writing.

ZZ: What do you think of the popular music press in England?

NK: Not a lot, frankly. I'm interested to see the way 'Street Life' is coming along - it suddenly seems to have blossomed, though I don't know how long it'll blossom for. I think the NME is currently going through a crisis period which could tear the whole fabric of the paper, the whole aesthetic, completely to bits. We've moved into the 20th floor of this real shitty IPC building, and everybody is discontented.... we're all going through our various personal problems: one of us is becoming an alcoholic, another a speed-freak, one wants to be the next Jack Kerouac.... everyone is discontented; the chemistry seems to have dissolved. When NME was at its peak, there was a definite human chemistry which bound Andrew Tyler, Ian McDonald, me and a few others.... Andrew was a real key figure, and Ian, when he was assistant editor, was a tremendously vibrant force - I can't overstate his importance as an energy force.

ZZ: Their contribution rate seems

to have declined dramatically lately.

NK: Well, we've all gone through this thing where we've become totally pissed off by the music business.... and we don't really know what to do as rock writers. We became suspicious of our own motives for writing.... which is why I very rarely do actual rock criticism anymore - very rarely will I review an album these days.

ZZ: That's like Frame - he refuses point blank to do reviews. What do you feel the role of the rock critic ought to be then?

NK: I think they should acquaint people with good music, and get the scene in perspective - because we're in the privileged position of being observers with a very close perspective on what's going down.... and we should get things in perspective for the readers. Of course, the whole thing has become so perverted these days; the whole rock critic thing came to a head with the Bruce Springsteen album and visit - that was just disgusting and shocking. Someone says he's the future of rock'n'roll, then next week someone else says that he's just a complete sham.... whatever Bruce Springsteen did have was just perverted out of all recognition by the critics.

ZZ: Yeah, that whole farce was just a total tragedy for Springsteen.... a guy who's been working hard to make it for years to come up against a load of meat-heads like that.

NK: 'Born to run' is a good album, which I enjoy listening to.... and that is all I can say about the guy. I mean, if I sat down and thought about it, I could probably come up with "What I Think About Bruce Springsteen", but it would be pointless. One of the worst aspects of that fiasco was that sort of table-tennis match - all the crap that went to and fro - with the MM staunchly for Springsteen, and NME feeling they had to be against him.... the petty levels of the MM/NME rivalry is so silly, and it goes on and on. It happened recently with Patti Smith - Charlie Murray raves about the album, so Steve Lake feels

it his duty to put it down and expose the hype - and basically very little is said about the music.

ZZ: Don't you feel that the lifestyle of the average rock critic is too far removed from the audience with which he's supposed to be communicating, and that his taste-buds inevitably become jaded as a result of hustling armfuls of free albums all the time?

NK: Absolutely. Someone like Pete Erskine, for instance, probably hasn't written a complimentary review for six months - he just puts everything down. But there again, I guess it's easy for me to say things like that now.... nevertheless, I do feel that the NME was in touch at one time.... we carved out our little niche and we were looked up to.

ZZ: Can we talk about what I think of as your key articles - landmarks by which I've always judged the lesser stuff in NME.... like the Syd Barrett piece, for instance...

NK: Well, the whole Syd Barrett thing was a grand obsession with me - I've always been intrigued by his music and I really wanted to know what happened to him. I was pretty surprised that no-one before me had bothered to write a piece on him - it seemed a very obvious thing to write about.

ZZ: With an article like that, how many drafts do you do? Does it take a lot of re-writing and bashing into shape?

NK: I did it straight off.... in fact, I do all my stuff straight off. The research for that one wasn't difficult either; all the information is there, all the people I spoke to were quite easy to get in touch with.... people like Storm from Hipgnosis and Peter Jenner. It took about two weeks to amass the information; the first interview was with Jenner, and the last, with Dave Gilmour, was on a Thursday evening - then I came straight back from doing that, went to a pub just around the corner from the NME office and sat down and wrote it.... it came very easily.

ZZ: What about the Beach Boys?

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NK: That was much harder because
it's so difficult to get information on
Brian Wilson. In Los Angeles, I
found a whole cordon surrounding
Wilson... most of his friends will
just give you a load of guff about him
- but I was very lucky to speak to
Tony Asher. That article began as a
result of my meeting a chick who was
a friend of Wilson's. She was a
groupie actually; she had the story on
all the Beach Boys, and on loads of
other musicians too... her whole life
is devoted to finding out everything
about all these guys... she knew all
about Gram Parsons too - and that,
as you can imagine, is a very inter-
esting story. His association with
the Stones, for instance; this naive
country boy who was attracted to the
decadent lifestyle of Keith Richard
and the Stones, his infatuation with
that dark side of life that the Stones
wear with such panache, but which,
in his case, led to total degeneration.

ZZ: You seem to be very drawn to-
wards the casualties of the rock
world.

NK: It's true... I really want to cool
off doing any more "casualty stories"
because it's going to become a yawn.
I was going to do an article on Brian
Jones - I've got some really incred-
ible stuff on him... stuff that has
never been revealed before. I really
enjoy this 'detective work' - going in
and getting the truth out of people. I
wish that there was more investigative
journalism in the pop press... I'm
surprised no-one from the MM, like
Allan Jones say, doesn't get on the
ball and dig out something special.

ZZ: Well, I shouldn't think he has
the time - he has to do about eight
features a week, review 7 albums
while he's doing the washing up, go
to review Snafu in Scunthorpe...

NK: I suppose you're right. I've been
very fortunate in that being a free-
lancer I could pick and choose my
subjects; I was never weighed down
by having to go and interview Thin
Lizzy when I could be going out and
checking on what had happened to
Brian Wilson. Actually, if you want
the truth, I thought my Wilson thing
was a failure - I thought it all just fell
apart in the third chapter. It was
building up quite well, but there was
just too much to squeeze into 10,000
words for the last part... you see, I
had to provide a very fixed 30,000
words in three equal parts - and as a
result an awful lot had to be discard-
ed... but I'm about to rectify that
because I've just signed a contract to
enlarge the piece into a book - they've
given me a month to finish it.

ZZ: I heard that you were playing
guitar on 'Slow Death' by the Flamin'
Groovies (one of the classic singles
of all time, folks).

NK: That's true.

ZZ: Are you actually audible in the
mix?

NK: Yes, I'm playing rhythm guitar.
I don't know if you've heard that live
French EP, but the version of 'Slow
Death' on that is much better. I don't
think Dave Edmunds did them justice
at all, and I'm very surprised they
went back to him to record their Sire
album (out soon)... he made them
sound wet, I thought. I got to know
the Groovies quite well, and I played

on the record because James Farrell's
hand was fucked-up at the time. The
same thing happened with Iggy Pop,
strangely enough; I spent some time
playing guitar with him because James
Williamson had got his hand broken by
an Alice Cooper bodyguard at some
recording party. He almost lost the
use of his hand, and sued them for
about a million dollars. We used to
play 'Louie Louie' all the time, and
Iggy would do these constant impro-
visations, which were brilliant. We
were just getting round to playing
'Road Runner' when Williamson's hand
got better. He didn't like the idea of
me playing with Iggy at all - he's got
this huge ego about No Other Guitarist
But Himself.

ZZ: Have you been on any other
records?

NK: I played on an Eno track, which
was a piece of shit.

ZZ: What happened to that band you
were going to form?

NK: Nothing really came of it... it
was around the time of my problems;
I got so messed up on various drugs
that I couldn't do anything - I couldn't
write and I couldn't play. All I did
was think of various names for my
group, if I ever got it together... I
was going to call them The Dance of
Romance, then the Young Lions, then
the Young Lords...

ZZ: How did you get un-messed up?

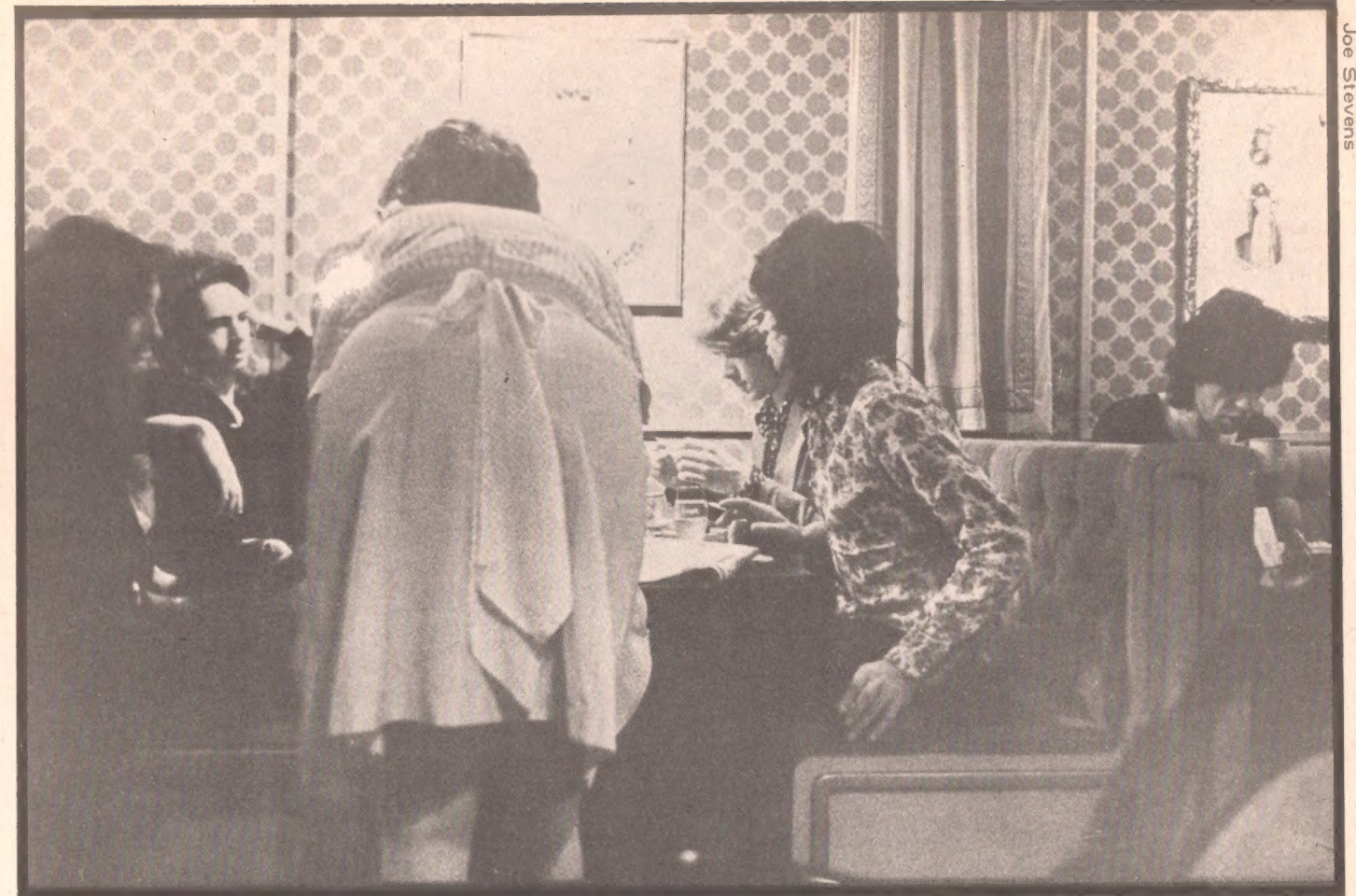
NK: Well, just will power - just the
realisation that I was fucking myself
up physically, financially, and every
other way. I mean, I was supporting
myself by a constant tour of record
companies getting albums... I could
give some good tips on how to support
a drug habit through the auspices of
various record companies... but
anyway, I cleaned myself up, which is
more than I can say about a lot of rock
stars; like there's a whole bunch of
guys who I've seen getting into heroin
over the last year and a half... real
terminal addicts who are slowly doing
themselves in. It's really disturbing
to say the least.

ZZ: You envisage another spate of
casualties then?

NK: I wouldn't be surprised; heroin
is the Next Hip Drug. It's unfortunate
that drugs are still such a taboo sub-
ject in rock, because the way they
affect music is phenomenal... I mean,
there are certain bands whose whole
outlook is totally dictated by how much
cocaine they use. The wonderful
XXXXXXXXXXXXX for example - I saw
them playing gigs in America, and the
actual fibre of the music was dominated
by the drugs they were taking... it was
quite alarming.

ZZ: To revert to your group (before
we get involved with libel suits!) -
did you actually play with other guys
at all?

NK: Yes, I tried to work something
out with Magic Michael, but nothing
came of that, and I went to the States,
where I began playing with Iggy, as I
mentioned. It had always been one of
my ambitions to be in a group with
Iggy - and I almost did at one point...
but I got too worried about the state of
him. He's very talented, is Iggy; one
of the two or three greats of all time,
but he's never going to be able to get
anything together. It just made me
very sad. He was like a Jekyll and



Joe Stevens

Hyde type - one minute he'd be so
together, writing these great songs,
and the next moment he'd be completely
gaga. After that, I came back here
and worked with a group called the
Sex Pistols for a while. They've had
a bit of publicity lately and look as if
they're going to happen in some way,
but there was no real empathy as far
as I was concerned. They're young
kids, about 18 or 19, Shepherds Bush
ex-mod types, and I'm 24 and a little
more worldly, I suppose. That was
the first time I've actually worked
with a group and rehearsed, and I
found it very enjoyable. Now I've got
an idea for a group that I want to call
The Subterraneans - I always start
with the name.

ZZ: Did you sell all your albums to
subsidise your lifestyle, or did you
hang on to your favourites?

NK: Well, I've just moved into this
place, and I've got to move my albums
over from my old place... I've got
about 500 I think. I still get off on
buying albums - to me, being given an
album is too easy.

ZZ: Can you actually go into a record
shop and know that there's something
there that you'll want?

NK: Not any more - and that's some-
thing that really depresses me. The
first time I went to America, I went
round all the shops and bought loads
of albums, and it was really exciting
and enthralling. Then a year later I
went back and when I returned I just
had a few albums that had been given
to me... I didn't even have any real
desire to play them. It was a total
let down. My love of music, over my
years as a rock critic/writer, has
lessened dramatically. I really used
to live for music, and now I've been
through periods when I don't even like

music... it's really depressing -
makes me feel old. I think an awful
lot of rock writers go through that.

ZZ: What would you say are your
favourite albums?

NK: That K-Tel Phil Spector compil-
ation, 'Blonde on Blonde', 'Exile On
Main Street', 'Raw Power', the Dylan
Royal Albert Hall Bootleg, 'Revolver',
the first album by 'Big Star'...

ZZ: Great record!

NK: It's a crime that their records
haven't been released in this country
- someone should put the first two
albums out as a double set... it'd be
incredible. I can't understand why
more bands don't go back and study
the great sounds of the sixties. One
of the albums I'm listening to at the
moment is by Andrew Gold, and that
guy knows what it is to get a good
guitar sound; he's listened to McGuinn
and the way the Byrds put records
together with that Rickenbacker. I'm
a real Sixties buff - I really pine for
the Sixties musically... there's not
very much that got me off in the
Seventies... the Stones, I think, are
one of the few bands to make the 60s/
70s transition successfully. The
thing about Big Star, for me, was the
way they got hold of the best sounds of
the sixties and applied seventies tech-
nology. I heard their 'Ballad of El
Goodo' in Detroit, just before the
Byrds re-union album was due out,
and I was literally in tears because I
thought it was a track from it... I
thought 'Jesus Christ, they've actually
done it... the Byrds have done it' -
and of course, they hadn't. But Big
Star had.

ZZ: Are you impressed by any of the
current crop of recording artistes...
there must be someone from the Sev-
enties...

NK: There is... Nils Lofgren. He's
the best thing I saw last year... he
really thrilled me. He had that real
passion and youth - plus he's an in-
credible musician and very charismat-
ic. He had everything; he was like
Eddie Cochran revisited, with a touch
of Jimi Hendrix... he's certainly
one of the very few people I actively
champion these days.

ZZ: Any others?

NK: I like what Neil Young's doing
now - he's really blossomed. I think
he's got a good track record now...
'Zuma' is a good album, and 'Tonight's
the Night' is incredible.

ZZ: How about English bands?

NK: I saw Roogalator; I enjoyed them
and liked their attitude. I'm interest-
ed in seeing any bands who do it well
and with energy. I enjoyed the Feel-
goods for a time, when they were
playing clubs - in fact I still enjoy
seeing them in big halls, but I think
they're crap... they're the English
J Geils Band. I really miss Brinsley
Schwarz; they were great - I always
enjoyed seeing them... one of the
last of the great British bands.

ZZ: Well, here we sit, two of the
greatest rock writers the world has
ever seen or ever will see... have
you any final words of wisdom for
those wishing to follow our footsteps
to fame and fortune?

NK: Yes. I think rock writers have
got to get their egos under control -
because rock writers are not as hot
as musicians. Rock writers cannot
live without musicians and rock music
... but musicians can live without
critics - and that's a stone fact. We
are just embellishments ultimately.



ZIGZAG DO-IT-YOURSELF DISCOGRAPHIES
#1: COUNTRY JOE McDONALD

In this, the first of an occasional series, you are presented with such information as has been dug up by the compiler, Brian Long (editor of The West Coast Newsletter). If you can add to it or dispute any of the details please write to Brian at 8 Whitefield Avenue Luton Beds LU3 3AQ - so that new information can be passed on in future issues - the idea being that eventually all the empty spaces will disappear!

COUNTRY JOE AND BLAIR HARDMAN

Album title	release date	tracks
THE GOODBYE BLUES Private pressing of only 210 white label copies	64	Goodbye blues / Haltie Carroll / He's a peaceful man / There was an old woman who had a little pig / I'm so glad I've got feet / Tell me where you're bound / Some jammed blues

COUNTRY JOE AND THE FISH

Extended players - all deleted	release date	tracks
RAG BABY 1	August 65	I feel like I'm fixing to die rag / Superbird (plus 'Fire in the city' sung by Peter Krug)
RAG BABY 2	June 66	Section 43 / Bass strings / Love (Bass strings is the same version as on 'Life and Times' album)
RAG BABY 3	71	Tricky Dicky / Kiss my ass / People's Army (record made for Vietnam veterans)

Album title	release date	American details	English details	tracks
ELECTRIC MUSIC FOR THE MIND AND BODY	April 67	Vanguard VSD 79244	Vanguard VSD 79244 previously Fontana STFL 6081	Flying high / Not so sweet Martha Lorraine / Death Sound / Porpoise mouth / Section 43 / Superbird / Sad and lonely times / Love / Bass strings / The Masked Marauder / Grace
I FEEL LIKE I'M FIXING TO DIE (First American copies had 'the Fish Game' - a sort of psychedelic snakes and ladders)	November 67	Vanguard VSD 79266	Vanguard VSD 79266 previously Fontana STFL 6087	The Fish cheer / Feel like I'm fixing to die rag / Who am I / Pat's song / Rock coast blues / Magoo / Janis / Thought dream / Thursday / Eastern Jam / Colours for Susan
TOGETHER	August 68	Vanguard VSD 79277	Vanguard VSD 79277 previously Vanguard SVRL 19006	Rock'n' soul music / Susan / Mojo Navigator / Bright suburban m's m's clean machine / Streets of your town / Fish moan / Harlem song / Waltzing in the moonlight / Bubbles / Cetacean / An untitled protest
HERE WE ARE AGAIN (American version had a lyric sheet)	July 69	Vanguard VSD 79299	Vanguard SVRL 19048 deleted	Here I go again / Donovan's reef / It's so nice to have love / Baby you're driving me crazy / Crystal Blues / For no reason / I'll survive / Maria / My girl / Doctor of electricity
GREATEST HITS	December 69	Vanguard VSD 6545	Vanguard VSD 79000	Fish cheer / Feel like I'm fixing to die rag / Maria / Streets of your town / Who am I / Porpoise mouth / Not so sweet Martha Lorraine / Masked Marauder / Bass strings / Here I go again
C. J. FISH	May 70	Vanguard VSD 6555	Vanguard VSD 6555	Sing sing sing / She's a bird / Mara / Hang on / The Baby Song / Hey Bobby / Silver and gold / Rockin' round the world / The love machine / Return of sweet Lorraine / Hand of man
THE LIFE AND TIMES OF COUNTRY JOE AND THE FISH FROM HAIGHT-ASHBURY TO WOODSTOCK	November 71	Vanguard 2-VAN 27/28	Vanguard VSD 27/28	I feel like I'm fixing to die rag / Bass strings / Flying high / Porpoise mouth / Untitled protest / Who am I / Grace / Waltzing in the moonlight / Death Sound / Janis / Sing sing sing / Superbird / Martha Lorraine / Rock'n' soul music / Love / Crystal Blues / and three more
THE BEST OF COUNTRY JOE AND THE FISH		Vanguard	Vanguard	Fish cheer / Fixin to die rag / Death Sound / Porpoise Mouth / Who am I / Not so sweet Martha Lorraine / Grace / Here I go again / Maria / Sing sing sing / Untitled protest / Harlem Song / Love machine

OTHER ALBUMS FEATURING COUNTRY JOE & THE FISH	release date	American details	English details	tracks
WOODSTOCK	July 70	Cotillion SD3-500	Atlantic K 60001	Rock'n' soul music
ZACHARIAH - ORIGINAL MOTION PICTURE SOUNDTRACK	November 72	Probe SPB 1026	Probe SPB 1026	We're the crackers / All I need

AMERICAN SINGLES	release date	label	number
NOT SO SWEET MARTHA LORRAINE/MARAUDER	June 67	Vanguard	
JANIS PART ONE / JANIS PART TWO	October 67	Vanguard	
THURSDAY / WHO AM I?	December 67	Vanguard	
ROCK AND SOUL MUSIC PARTS ONE & TWO	68	Vanguard	
HERE I GO AGAIN/BABY YOU'RE DRIVING	69	Vanguard	
SING SING SING/ROCKIN'ROUND THE WORLD	70	Vanguard	
FEEL LIKE I'M FIXIN TO DIE /		Vanguard	

ENGLISH SINGLES	release date	label	number
NOT SO SWEET MARTHA LORRAINE / LOVE	67	Fontana	
HERE I GO AGAIN / ITS SO NICE TO HAVE LOVE	69	Vanguard	
FEEL LIKE I'M FIXIN TO DIE /	70	Vanguard	

There were also a number of foreign Singles - especially in Japan, Scandinavia and France. 'Janis part 2' is an orchestrated version of part one.

COUNTRY JOE McDONALD

Album title	release date	American details	English details	tracks
THINKING OF WOODY	December 69	Vanguard VSD 6546	Vanguard VSD 6546	Pastures of plenty / Talking dust bowl / Blowing down that old dusty road / So long it's been good to know you / Tom Joad / Sinking of the Reuben James / Roll on Columbia / Pretty boy Floyd / When the curfew blows / This land is your land
TONIGHT I'M SINGING JUST FOR YOU	March 70	Vanguard VSD 6557	Vanguard VSD 6557	Ring of fire / Tennessee stud / Heartaches by the number / I've got a tiger by the tail / Crazy Arms / You done me wrong / All of me belongs to you / Oklahoma hills / Tonight I'm singing just for you / Friend lover woman wife / Six days on the road
HOLD ON IT'S COMING	April 71	Vanguard VSD 79314	Vanguard VSD 79314	Hold on it's coming / Air Algiers / Only love is worth the pain / Playing with fire / Travelling / Joe's Blues / M' Big Pig / Balancing on the edge of time / Jamila / Hold on it's coming once again
WAR WAR WAR	October 71	Vanguard VSD 79315	Vanguard VSD 79315	Forward / The call / Young fellow my lad / The man from Aphanaska / The munition maker / The twins / Jean Duprez / War widow / The march of the dead
INCREDIBLE - LIVE	February 72	Vanguard VSD 79316	Vanguard VSD 79316	Entertainment is my business / Sweet Marie / Kiss my ass / Living in the future in a plastic dome / Walk in Santiago / Tricky Dicky / You know what I mean / On my my / Deep down / Free Someday / I'm on the road again
PARIS SESSIONS	September 73	Vanguard VSD 79328	Vanguard VSD 79328	Fantasy / Movieola / I'm so tired / Movin' / I don't know why / Zombies in a house of madness / Sexist pig / Colorado Town / Coulene / Anne / St Tropez
COUNTRY JOE	December 74	Vanguard VSD 79348	Vanguard VSD 79348	Doctor Hip / Old Joe Corey / Making money in Chile / You messed over me / Memories / Chile / Pleasin' / Jesse James / Satisfactory / It's finally over
PARADISE WITH AN OCEAN VIEW	November 75	Fantasy F 9495	Fantasy FTA 3002	Tear down the walls / Holy Roller / Lost my connection / Save the whales / Oh Jamaica / Lonely on the road / The limit / Tricks / Breakfast for two

OTHER ALBUMS ON WHICH HE APPEARS	release date	American details	English details	tracks
QUIET DAYS IN Clichy - ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK	October 70	Vanguard VSD 79304	Sonet SMTF 622	Quiet days 1 / Nys' love / Hungry Miller and the hungry world / Quiet days 2 / Mara
WOODSTOCK	July 70	Cotillion SD3-500	Atlantic K 60001	Fish cheer / Feel like I'm fixing to die rag
CELEBRATION - BIG SUR FESTIVAL 1970	April 71	Ode 7700B	A&M AML5 2020	Entertainment is my business / Air Algiers
A TRIBUTE TO WOODY GUTHRIE part two	June 72	Warner Bros	Warners K 46144	Woman at home

AMERICAN SINGLES	release date	label	number
DOCTOR HIP / CHILE		Vanguard	

ENGLISH SINGLES	release date	label	number
FANTASY / HOLD ON IT'S COMING	71	Vanguard	VAN 1006
BREAKFAST FOR TWO / LOST MY CONNECTION	January 76	Fantasy	FTC 123

Again there were a number of foreign Singles - notably 'Quiet days in Clichy' which made the Scandinavian top ten. Research: BRIAN LONG. Execution: PETE FRAME 3/76

"There is absolutely no doubt at all.....Gram Parsons is the James Dean of the Zigzag generation" asserts apprentice epigrammatist Mac Garry, who goes on to investigate GRAM'S LAST SONG



A few pages into 'Rosewood Casket', one of a collection of essays by Eve Babitz published in a paperback called 'Eve's Hollywood'**, I realised that the "James Byrns" in the story could only be Gram Parsons. . . . and my mind immediately focused on the story twice as hard. I'd originally bought the book (which, if you're not a Hollywood freak like me, is an extremely tiresome piece of literature redeemed only by this one chapter) because I was about to board the next plane to London - six thousand miles without printed matter had me in a state of advanced panic at the airport news stall - and I was familiar with miss Babitz's name as executrix of the excellent sleeve artwork on the Byrds' 'Untitled' album, and for her collages on a couple of Buffalo Springfield albums. I also recall Michael Wale babbling excitedly about her virtues (if that's the appropriate word to use here) just before he surrendered himself into the arms of the National Health Service following the hectic Led Zeppelin tour of the States in 1973. . . . but that didn't prevent me buying the book, which, as I mentioned, is fairly bad, and is primarily concerned with her grooving exploits amongst the rich and handsome he-men of Southern California (which had me wondering just how Wale had fitted into the scheme of things). She had also written a rather moving obituary about Gram in Rolling Stone, if I remember right; a tribute which revealed that she'd been fairly close to him.

Which is why my ever alert senses snapped with recognition as I read, in 'Rosewood Casket', that not only did "James" come from south of the Mason Dixon Line, but that "his eyes were too blue. . . like periwinkles from the sea".

"James" made her think of "yellow moons and magnolias", his cocaine came "in sealed vials from Germany", and he was often to be seen in the company of "Jack Hunter" (Keith Richard, I assume), who played in a "jagged" (i.e. Jagged) rock band.

Miss Babitz saw weirdness in the Byrns/Hunter relationship: as if "death could be tomorrow morning", and she reckoned that they diminished each other - "like Picasso and Stravinsky sharing an apartment".

Phil Kaufman, Gram's longtime pal and tour manager, and the chap who marinated the dead singer's carcass and roasted it to a crisp out there in the desert, was not entirely complimentary about the authoress, so I think it would be rather unwise to quote his actual appraisal of her character. . . . but he noted a couple



of clues I'd missed: "James Byrns" equals Gram Burns (as in fire) and "Jack Hunter" equals someone hunting for jack/smack.

More from Kaufman later - meanwhile, back to Eve Babitz for what I consider to be the most interesting snippet in her piece. She says that "James's" favourite book was 'The Diamond as Big as The Ritz' by F Scott Fitzgerald, which is the story of a rich man, the foundation of whose house is a huge diamond. While he is trying to make a deal with God, his children escape with a handful of rhinestones - which to them constituted wealth. "I always think about those rhinestones" Gram tells Eve - and we know that Gram himself "escaped" his background and moved to Los Angeles (though he evidently wasn't prepared to disassociate himself from the quarterly standing order which always allowed him to live in the style to which he'd grown accustomed).

All of which has nothing to do with Gram's last song. . . . apart from the fact that the book spurred me into digging out an old idea I had to write another article about Parsons, which I was going to do for two reasons: his popularity with you readers is just staggering, and when I collaborated on his obituary in Zigzag 35 (before the release of 'Return of the Grievous Angel'), I was not convinced. At that point, I tended to think he was a wanker. And in this respect

I was not alone. From what I can gather, Parsons wasn't too popular as a person - unless you were in his clique of friends - but after his death, he was never thought of as less than sweet and wonderful. Witness the Eagles' 'My Man' for example.

Let me now grovel and eat humble pie by saying that I think Parsons' talent was astounding and his music, as far as I'm concerned, captivating. The 'Grievous Angel' album is a masterpiece, and his death, close on the heels of completing this epic, was timed with a perfection that characterised all his work.

Nick Kent told me that he was considering the possibility of writing a book about Parsons, and Tobler and Frame literally have over 18 hours of taped conversation with Phil Kaufman, which they plan to turn into a book - so there should soon be ample yardage on the fellow - but meanwhile, I thought it might be interesting to dig below the surface of what was Gram's last song: 'In My Hour Of Darkness'.

I consider it most unlikely that any of you 279,000 (by conservative estimate) Zigzag readers would be so foolish as to live without a copy of 'Grievous Angel', the album on which the song appears, but nevertheless, for greater clarity, the lyrics are below (reprinted with the personal permission of Gram's manager and publisher Eddie Tickner).

Emory Gordy, in London with Emmylou Harris and the Hot Band, filled me in on the background of the sessions for the album: "We laid down all the backing tracks in a week. Gram played us each of the songs he had got ready, and Glen would already have a basic chord chart written out prior to coming to the studio, and we just took it from there. It was all very loose as far as formal arranging was concerned; we just played what we thought was right for the song, and it all seemed to fall together. If anything was wrong, we heard it on the playback and rectified with a new take - but 'In my hour of darkness' went very smoothly, as I recall.

"Ron Tutt, who drummed on most of the album, couldn't make it on the night we cut that track, so Gram called up his old friend N D Smart. He was in good shape, Gram. . . . there was a lot of energy going on in the studio for the whole of that album - Gram was bouncing around all over the place, and Emmy was bouncing around him. . . . they were great, very happy sessions".

Though credited with co-authorship, Emmylou Harris remains extremely modest about the extent of her coll-

In my hour of darkness, in my time of need,
Oh Lord, grant me vision, Oh Lord, grant me speed.

Once I knew a young man, went driving through the night;
Miles and miles without a word, but just his half-beam lights.
Who'd have ever thought they'd build such a deadly Denver bend?
To be so strong, to take so long, as it would till the end.

Another young man safely strummed his silver stringed guitar,
And he played to people everywhere - some say he was a star.
But he was just a country boy, his simple songs confessed,
And the music he had in him, so very few possessed.

Then there was an old man, kind and wise with age,
And he read me just like a book, and he never missed a page;
And I loved him like my father, and I loved him like my friend. . .
And I knew his time would shortly come, but I did not know just when.

And here are the participants on this three and three quarter minute band of gold:

Vocals:	Gram Parsons
Harmonies:	Emmylou Harris and Linda Ronstadt
Piano:	Glen D Hardin
Bass:	Emory Gordy
Drums:	N D Smart
Acoustic guitar:	Herb Pederson
Dobro:	Bernie Leadon
Fiddle:	Byron Berline
Pedal Steel:	Al Perkins
Lead guitar:	James Burton

Photograph of Gram Parsons, aged 8, courtesy of Phil Kaufman's collection

aboration. "My contribution was very minor.... I was an energy source rather than composer on that one. Gram's style was to start a number of songs and then delay finishing them until the last possible moment. Often he'd work on an idea while it was fresh in his mind, and then set it aside until time demanded he complete it - and in the case of 'In my hour of darkness', we put the finishing little touches to it on the day of the session. All I really did was make a few odd suggestions in the wording of the lyric; it was really Gram's song... a song very personal to him, and I tend to feel that his giving me credit was just an example of his generosity - a token of friendship and an acknowledgement of my help".

"I came back to LA from the East Coast, I remember, and went over to Glen D's house with Gram, who'd been spending the past few days going over the songs he was preparing for the album.... and we worked pretty hard on 'In my hour of darkness', but we only finished it on the day we cut it" (at Wally Heider's Studio 4 in Los Angeles, August 1973).

"The song was done in maybe two takes" Emmy continues, "...as were the rest of the tracks, and we cut it totally live; everybody was playing together, and Gram and I were singing simultaneously - though they were only guide vocals, which we re-recorded with some help from Linda Ronstadt. I'd gotten to know Linda quite well, and I'd gone over to see her rehearsing for a gig at the Palomino.... and Gram invited her down to sing on the session - so she showed up and sang on 'In my hour of darkness'.

The music and performance are (he writes without fear of contradiction) absolutely exquisite, but it was the lyrics which really hooked me into the song. I guessed that the middle verse was about Clarence White, but it was Chris Ethridge (when he came over with the Burritos last Spring) who told me that the first verse was about film star Brandon de Wilde, and the last verse about a guy called Sid Keiser.

Back to fearless Phil Kaufman: "The first time I ever met Gram was when I was working for the Rolling Stones, who were in Los Angeles to mix their 'Beggar's Banquet'. Gram flew in with Keith Richard and then I drove him out to Brandon's place in Topanga.... he stayed there for a while, they were real good friends".

"Indirectly, it was Brandon who got Gram into the Byrds" says Eddie Tickner. "Brandon introduced Gram to his business manager, Larry Spector, who subsequently became Gram's business manager.... and who was also, at one time, business manager for the Byrds. It was Larry Spector who brought Gram into contact with Chris Hillman, following which he was invited to join the Byrds".

As Kaufman says, Brandon de Wilde is probably best remembered for his part in 'Shane'.... he was the little blond kid who worshipped the integrity ridden gunslinger Alan Ladd.

To my surprise, all but one of the six or so film encyclopaediae, which I consulted in the Aylesbury reference library, totally ignored de Wilde, but the 4th edition of Leslie Halliwell's

'Filmgoer's Companion' has the grace to describe him as "American child actor, later juvenile lead" before going on to list his films. Apparently he played in 492 performances of a Broadway play called 'Member of the Wedding', which opened in 1950, he starred in a TV series called 'Jaimie' (1953-4), was in 'Shane' (1953), 'Blue Denim' (1959), 'Hud' (1963), and 'Wild in the Sky' (1972) among others.

He was born in Brooklyn on 9th April 1942 and snuffed it in Lakewood, near Denver Colorado on 6th July 1972.

Chris Ethridge: "Brandon had this really beautiful home, about 3 or 4 acres, and Gram was staying out there when we first got the Burritos together. Brandon was killed out in Colorado; he was driving a Volkswagen bus through the rain - it was night and it was raining real hard, and evidently he couldn't quite make a bend in the road.... the bus slid out of control and crashed into all this equipment parked off the side of the road.... bulldozers and rolling machines and so on, and he was killed".

"Who'd have ever thought they'd build such a deadly Denver bend?"

I'm sure that everyone reading this article will be familiar with Clarence White's genius and the story of his life, so I'll skip lightly over the verse concerning him. If you haven't read Frame's touching piece on Clarence in Zigzag 33, it would be worth your while enquiring whether the back issue department have any copies left (though absolutely no copies remain of number 35, containing my brilliant Parsons obituary). Clarence died on 14th July 1973, just a few weeks before Gram, and all who knew him assure me that he was just such a sincere human being, totally unaltered by adulation. One in a hundred.

"Sid Keiser was a sweetheart" says Eddie Tickner, "...one of the sweetest guys that God ever made; just a beautiful person. He never had a bad word for anyone.... just loved life, loved living, and loved getting high".

Everybody agrees, it seems. "Sid Keiser was one of the most beautiful people that ever was", according to Chris Ethridge. "He hung around LA a lot, amongst movie people and musicians, and everybody loved him.... he was the kindest man I ever met in my life".

Eddie: "I first met Sid Keiser about ten years ago. He was in public relations - specifically, he was Peter Lawford's press officer and, in fact, he died in Peter Lawford's house in Palm Springs. He was a very laid back, low key sort of a guy, but somehow or another, he got connected with Alan Pariser and Barry Feinstein in the management of Delaney and Bonnie; Group Three Management they were called - though they never really got off the ground".

Over to Kaufman for another testimonial: "Sid was a man with no enemies.... zero. I've never met anyone in my life who didn't like Sid Keiser.... who also had the best grass in the world. Number one grade, always - and he'd been getting the best grass for maybe twenty years, because he was close with some farmer down in

Mexico. He and his friends had been into dope since the fifties, when hardly anybody had even heard of marijuana. Like he used to hang out with Lenny Bruce and Lord Buckley, people like that, who were getting high in the fifties".

Eddie: "For some months, between his leaving the Burritos and returning to Los Angeles to cut the GP album, Gram had been living here in England.... he had a flat over here. He came back via New Orleans, which was his home, and on to Hollywood.... and I think that was when he met Sid. And from that day on, he often called on him.... made his daily stop or whatever".

Phil Kaufman: "Don't get me wrong; Sid was not what you'd call a drug dealer - he was just a guy who liked to get high, and he always had the best.... so people who wanted some came to him on occasion. I used to tread on my tongue when I walked out of Sid's house; his grass was unreal. You had to be careful going home, because you were invariably wrecked. You could say that he was supplying grass and coke to a very select little crowd.... he's dead now, so I don't suppose he'd mind me telling you that.... if he does, he'll let me know".

"He was a big man, kind of heavy" says Chris Ethridge, "and it was just too much for him - he had a heart attack and died in his sleep".

That was within days of Clarence's death.

"I knew Clarence, but had never met either Brandon or Sid" says Emmylou, who only weeks after recording 'In my hour of darkness' was told that Gram too was dead.

I guess you have to learn to accept sudden death as an inevitability in the rock world, but Frame says that when he and Tobler went to interview Linda Ronstadt in late 1973, they saw Emmylou in her hour of darkness. "I remember we were interviewing Roger McGuinn" Frame recalls. "It was October 30th, and his wife came on the phone to tell him that Topanga was on fire. We went driving round there later that week, and the whole canyon was covered in ash; the fire had just burned the shit out of it, so it looked like acres and acres of enlarged elephant skin. Then, maybe a couple of days later, we went up to Beachwood Drive to talk to Linda, and Emmylou Harris was staying with her. She was obviously in a bit of a state - just sat in the corner of the room, quietly sewing some embroidery. Gram had been dead for less than two months, and she'd just seen the Canyon on fire. I think Linda was bolstering her during a pretty rough period".

Frame still has her startled autograph: "thanks for asking for my autograph, Emmylou Harris".

I am interested in hearing any of your views, comments or ideas about Gram Parsons, his life and music. Please drop me a line.

Mac

**Should you want to try getting hold of a copy of 'Eve's Hollywood', you could send two dollars to Dell Books PO Box 1000, Pinebrook, NJ 07059, USA. Their reference number is 3346 (published in February 1975).



If any of you missed seeing Emmylou Harris and the Hot Band on their recent tour, you were either very unlucky or very foolish. I can't recall anyone I've spoken to mentioning the event in terms of other than the highest praise, and they all echo my feelings that a swift return to these shores would really be of the greatest benefit to us all. In a band where everyone was a star by the end of the tour – even if one or two members couldn't aspire to that status beforehand because they weren't really well known – the stand-out star was James Burton, Telecaster artist extraordinaire.

James has been spoken of several times in earlier Zigzags, notably in number 16, where both Mick Grabham and David Gates, in totally separate articles, said things like "some of the best guitar solos you're ever likely to hear" and "the best guitar player I ever saw", and in the Rick Nelson gargantuan, which meandered its way through issues 45, 46 and 47.

As a result of this interest and of my own enthusiasm, I was pretty keen to speak with James (who doesn't give interviews generally), and told everyone connected with the business side of the tour, from the excellent press people at Warner Bros, to Paul Fenn, the agent for the tour, and to Martyn Smith, an old mate of ours, who was the tour manager.

On the evening of the final gig, Martyn told me to hang around in this bar at Hammersmith, where he would eventually come and collect me, and tell me whether I'd lucked out. Like the Welsh Californian that he is, he didn't show up, so in the rather low class company of two photographers and a lawn mower, I spent a couple of hours getting exceedingly pissed. Throughout the evening, the conversation, as well as getting typically rude and disjointed as a result of our alcoholic excesses, kept veering towards the gig we'd just enjoyed, with particular reference to the encore of 'Shop Around', where two of the most blood-curdling solos any of us had ever heard were unleashed. The first was by Hank DeVito on pedal steel (of whom you can learn much more in issue 9 of 'Omaha Rainbow', to be published in a few months), and such was its calibre that the legendary Jeff Dexter, the corpulent Tom Sheehan and myself, standing together at the back of the

stalls, were left quite breathless.

Then it was James' turn. He knew he had something to follow there – but he at least equalled the previous solo's brilliance... and, additionally, played it behind his head! I've subsequently learned that he won his first talent contest at the age of about 14 (!) by employing similar tactics, but it's only on special occasions that he does it these days. The only other person I've seen do it was Joe Brown, and that was 1962, I think, and was for a much briefer solo. You should have been there....

When they threw us out of the bar, at around midnight, my three drinking partners, now supplemented by Paul Conroy, sometime TV star, convinced me that I should drive them home. Outnumbered as I was, I could hardly refuse, and our route took us past the Hyde Park Hotel, where the band was staying. Screeching to a halt outside, I bounded in and demanded to speak to Martyn Smith, and when my pleadings were denied by the foreign person at the desk, wrote him a note, to which I attached the Rick Nelson trilogy already mentioned.

I arrived home at an hour when milkmen apparently rise, and was awoken by the telephone at about 9.30 the next morning. Martyn Smith told me to come to the hotel that afternoon, when Mr Burton would like to have a few words with me about the Rick Nelson articles. Seemingly, he was less than happy about some of the things that were said about him....

In our usual disreputable state, Mac and I sullied the elegant hotel reception area, watched Atticus (of Sunday Times fame) fail to get an interview with Burton, and finally, as Mac sped hither and thither soliciting information about Gram Parsons (the results of which should be somewhere in this mag), I sat down for about 20 minutes with James Burton. The conversation was necessarily somewhat disjointed due to a number of circumstances, and the usual request was made that no questions be asked about Elvis Presley. When I intimated that I felt Elvis's best days were behind him, James contented himself with saying "He's still the king".

James Burton was born in Shreveport, Louisiana, and admits to being maybe a few months older than Rick Nelson. His first record was made when he

was 15 years old, and is still a real classic. "It was 'Suzie Q' by Dale Hawkins". I believe you wrote the song as well, but didn't get any credit for it. Why was that? "Well, what do you know about the business at the age of 15? You're not in it for the business...." At which point I showed James 'The Best of Dale Hawkins Vol One', released here on Checker a couple of years ago, and asked which tracks he was on. "Only 'Suzie Q' and 'Don't treat me this way'; all the other tracks were with Roy Buchanan, I believe. I didn't do a full album with Dale; I did 'Suzie Q', and then we went to Chicago to do a couple more tracks, but shortly after that, I left – that was after being with him for about a year". Why did you leave? "I don't know.... I was just into different things. I went on to play on the 'Louisiana Hayride' (a famous country music radio show of the late fifties), and then worked with a guy called Bob Luman. I played with lots of different singers on the show".

Bob Luman enjoyed a brief burst of popularity over here with a record called 'Let's think about living' on Warner Bros in 1960; it got to number 7 in the singles chart, and was an "answer song" to the many "death records" of the day.... suggesting that hits like 'El Paso' by Marty Robbins and 'Ebony Eyes' by the Everly Brothers were too pre-occupied with the morbid aspects of life. Although the question wasn't asked, I don't think Luman made any spectacular recordings whilst Burton was in his band, which was probably 1957. Bob Luman has now, over the last couple of decades, taken a stance as a solid country and western artist whose records, on Epic, don't get released here.

It was while he was playing with Luman, that Ricky Nelson first heard James Burton. I'll borrow a quote from the Rick Nelson thing in ZZ 45 here: "One day I was up at Imperial Records, and I heard this music coming from the outer office, backing Bob Luman; it was James Burton and James Kirkland. When I heard that, I wanted them, because it was exactly what I had in mind". Oddly, Burton didn't play lead guitar on Rick's first album, but supported Joe Maphis's lead on rhythm. "Yeah, with Joe Maphis and I believe – I can't recall if Barney Kessel was there. I know



Robert Ellis

**After almost twenty years
of gaping in awe at his virtuosity,
the stealthy and tenacious Three-chord Tobler
finally corners legendary guitarist
James Burton**

for sure that Joe was on it".

The rest of that first Nelson band appears to have slipped into obscurity since those days. An enquiry as to their whereabouts elicited the following information. "James Kirkland (the bass player)... oh my goodness, I haven't seen him in years. I understand he moved back to Texas... he left early on" (and was replaced by Joe Osborn). "Gene Garf was the piano player in the original band, but as a matter of fact, he had more to do with Ozzie's band than Ricky's; he worked for Ozzie on the TV show".

Ozzie is Ozzie Nelson – Rick's father – who had a long running TV show called 'The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet', and also ran a band. According to the legendary Rocky Prior, who has seen clips of the series, at the end of the show a curtain would open, and there would be Ricky, Burton, Kirkland and so on, performing Ricky's latest single. Not a bad plug, I imagine.

I've never been sure whether it's Gene Garf or Gene Garth. "You've got me – I was never sure myself... we worked together on sessions, but

that was about it". How about Richie Frost, the drummer. "He was playing drums around town, doing sessions, and then he retired. He's not in the business anymore – he moved up to Oregon and bought a restaurant".

Astonishingly, as it's something like eighteen years ago, James remembered the first two gigs he did with Ricky Nelson. "The first bookings were at Long Beach and San Diego". Was it a teenage heart-throb scene, with screaming and all that? "It was a teenage idol thing alright.... I mean, Rick was young in the

business and so was I".

James was with Rick Nelson from around 1958 until probably 1966, when he joined Elvis - an arrangement which still continues. However, it was during this period that he began to make his own records, and while I have never heard any of those that are mentioned, and therefore can't give you much information, these are the ones I've heard of. 'Jimmy's Blues'/'Love Lost' on the Miramar label. "That was for a friend of mine who wanted to put together a record It was just a sort of quickly put together thing". Apparently, the year was 1964 or 5. Then there's an album on Capitol called 'Corn Pickin and Lick Slidin' by James Burton and Ralph Mooney - a pedal steel player - which came out in 1967 or 68. "That was a country picking type thing. country rock, I guess". Like the 2 country albums you made with Rick? ('Country Fever' and 'Bright Lights and Country Music', re-issued in 1973 on American MCA as a double called 'Rick Nelson Country', and highly recommended). "Yeah, but ours were all instrumentals - and not necessarily in the country vein. The albums with Ricky were varied too; country, bluegrass, new songs. all sorts. My album with Ralph had things like 'The Fugitive', which I also recorded with Merle Haggard, our version of 'Your Cheatin Heart', a couple of tunes we wrote ourselves. It was basically just a country album. I played guitar, Ralph played pedal steel, Joe Osborn played bass, Al Casey was rhythm guitar, Jimmy Gordon was the drummer, and I think Glen D Hardin may have played piano, though I'm not too sure on that one". At this point, the famous Omaha O'Brien, sitting next to us (waiting to interview Emory Gordy) noted that Hank DeVito had told him that the album was one of which he thought very highly, and one of the first he purchased when he was learning to play steel guitar. Obviously, this is a record we should all have, I think you'll agree, so let's follow the lead given by Rocky who has already written to Capitol Records, c/o EMI, Manchester Square, London W1, requesting that it be released on the Vine (budget) label. The final Burton original from this period is one on which I have very little information: it's by Jim and Joe, presumably Burton and Osborn, and one side is 'Daisy Mae'. I don't even know the label.

Also during the mid-Sixties, James was involved with an American TV show called 'Shindig', the brainchild of our very own British Jack Good, who graduated from the late fifties ITV shows like 'Oh Boy' and 'Boy Meets Girls' to make similar great rock and roll programmes in the colonies. Didn't 'Shindig' have a kind of house band who backed everyone who came on the show? "Well, actually there were two groups: We had a group called The Shindogs, who backed most of the rock stars, and then they had a regular house band that backed up certain acts. They tried to keep us separate from the house band, which they did - so they actually had two groups on the show". So who was in The Shindogs apart from yourself? "Glen Hardin, Delaney Bramlett, Joey Cooper the singer, and Chuck Blackwell on drums". Leon Russell too? "No, Leon wasn't in it. He appeared on 'Shindig', but only in a few of the

shows - he didn't stay very long". Presumably, enough is known by the average Zigzagger about Glen Hardin and Delaney Bramlett, but perhaps I should note that Blackwell was a Mad Dog with Joe Cocker, and that both Blackwell and Cooper were part of Leon Russell's Shelter People and can be found on several of Leon's currently out-of-fashion albums, as well as things like Don Preston solo efforts.

Another solo record by James Burton was 'The Guitar Sounds of James Burton' released here by A&M in 1971. I expressed my discontent at the quality of this album, repeating what I had already written in the Nelson saga, and James revealed various mitigating circumstances. "That album was a bit rushed for me. Basically, I was in Nashville recording with Elvis, and after the sessions, the producer (also Elvis's producer - Felton Jarvis) said we should go in and cut an album. It was too rushed for me; we just didn't have the material together, because I hadn't had time to sit down and write, and really put some thought into it. So that was the basic reason - they were screaming for an album, and we didn't have time to make sure it was good". That being the last one, your solo albums are pretty few and far between "I've turned down quite a few things. I plan to do more albums, but I'm not going to make any more until I get my thing together. work out all the ideas".

As I'm sure everybody knows, James now performs a joint function as the star guitar player for both Emmylou and Elvis, so there's not much more in the way of history to be told at the moment. Hopefully, next time the Hot Band hit us, there'll be more time for a longer and more detailed conversation. However, I did have a short conversation about things other than his illustrious past, and I think it'll come out best if I quote it in full. Here it is.

ZZ: You're cited as being one of the first people to use banjo strings on a guitar.

JB: Yes. I imagine that was probably in 1957 or 58.

ZZ: Why did you decide to do that? JB: Well, everybody's got his own thing. I just prefer doing something a little different from the normal guitar player.

ZZ: Do they bend more easily? (asks Lonnie Donegan-imitator Tobler, attempting to introduce a technical note to the conversation!)

JB: If you're talking about a basic guitar string - yes, a banjo string is a little more flexible.

ZZ: You've become the obvious hero of the Telecaster cult. I think Mr Fender should show his gratitude in some way. David Gates said you had a particular style - with treble turned full up. Is that correct?

JB: I have a basic way of playing, which to me is natural - the natural tone of the guitar. but I always try to reach for more - a bit more than the normal guitar would put out. I prefer a lot of highs on certain types of tune - but I try to remain flexible, playing in different styles.

ZZ: Is the treble often higher than most people would use it?

JB: Not necessarily. It depends on the type of tune we're doing.

ZZ: Is there anyone else who plays like that? David Gates mentioned Dave Mason and the guy who used to

be in Blues Image.

JB: The late great Don Rich, who was with Buck Owens - he used an awful lot of treble. but I think he was one of the very few. A lot of blues guitar players turn up the treble - like Roy Buchanan uses a lot of screaming highs.

ZZ: Do you remember playing on a track called 'Someday Soon'?

JB: Sure. I hired Buddy Emmons for that on steel guitar. that's one of my favourite albums. (The album in question is 'Who Knows Where The Time Goes' by Judy Collins on Elektra. The track under discussion boasts what I consider to be the ultimate in supergroups: James on lead guitar, Buddy Emmons on steel, Stephen Stills on bass, Van Dyke Parks on piano, Jim Gordon on drums, and Judy Collins of course, on vocals and acoustic guitar. James is also featured on 3 other tracks of the album, which I consider an essential record).

ZZ: Do you remember that James Hendricks album? (Note: Not Jimi, but Mama Cass's husband James).

JB: Very well. the guy with Johnny Rivers. I think he moved back east - but as a matter of fact, I worked with him again just recently. I did a date with Johnny Rivers and he was there we recorded one of his tunes.

ZZ: Not 'Summer Rain' again? (Note - this is an ace song, by either James Hendricks or Johnny Rivers).

JB: I prefer not to mention the title, but it's a very good song. I'm sure you've heard it before.

At which point, almost inevitably, we got back to Rick Nelson, and in particular what I had written about Burton in Zigzag. Rick had said: "I think it's important to get out and play live, because sessions are very confining. you can get trapped into doing sessions all the time". Presumably, that was the part of the article to which James took exception. "That stuff about travelling", he said, ".... I prefer doing both. I don't think you can do just one - it's nice to play out on the road as well as in the studio. it keeps you from getting into a rut".

I've recently been told that when Rick Nelson was getting the Stone Canyon Band together, he asked James to join, but by then James was well into the Elvis trip. Categorically, Rick's popularity has been less since he and Burton have been apart, although that's not to put down Tom Brumley, the exceptional steel player with the Stone Canyon Band, or even Randy Meisner, who was in an early band. But latest news has it that Brumley has left Nelson, and that MCA have told Rick he can look for another label. I suggested to James that maybe he might help out his old boss, but the subject wasn't pursued. When Nelson comes over for his scheduled appearance at the Wembley country festival in April, we'll know just what is happening, but I still think a guest appearance by Burton could do a lot for him.

Acknowledgements are due to the following for their assistance in getting this thing on the road: Martyn Smith, Paul Fenn, Eddie Tickner, Phil Kaufman, Peter O'Brien, Rocky Prior (who now has James' autograph), Tony Byworth, Keith Smith, Dafydd Rees of Rock Research, and finally to the man himself - James Burton, for his words and particularly for his music. Let's hope we can explore it further next time. John

Please note that this discography is not complete, and that inclusion here is not necessarily a recommendation, as often James is mixed so far down as to be almost inaudible. If you have any additional information, please send it to me c/o Zigzag for subsequent updating.

DALE HAWKINS	'Best of Dale Hawkins, Vol 1'	(Checker)
JAMES BURTON	'Jimmy's Blues'/'Love Lost'	(Miramar)
JAMES BURTON AND RALPH MOONEY	'Corn Pickin and Lick Slidin'	(Capitol)
JIM AND JOE	'Daisy Mae'/'	()
JAMES BURTON	'The guitar sounds off'	(A&M)
JUDY COLLINS	'Who knows where the time goes'	(Elektra)
	Also on a couple of Judy Collins compilation albums, but originating on this one. Superb.	
JOHNNY CASH	'John R Cash'	(CBS)
MAC DAVIS	'Burning thing'	(CBS)
	James is probably on various other Mac Davis albums too	
PHIL EVERLY	'Star Spangled Springer'	(RCA)
	Credited as James E Burton	
ARLO GUTHRIE	'Running Down The Road'	(Reprise)
	Note interesting argument between (apparently) James and Clarence White at the start of 'Creole Belle'	
MERLE HAGGARD	'Same train, Different time'	(Capitol)
	Uncredited, but Rocky insists it's Burton	
EMMYLOU HARRIS	'Pieces Of The Sky'	(Warner)
	'Elite Hotel'	(Warner)
	Both highly recommended	
RICK NELSON	'The Very Best Of'	(Sunset)
	'Legendary Masters'	(UA)
	Both readily available.	

James also plays on various other Rick Nelson albums, all now deleted on UA or MCA: 'Ricky'/'Rick Nelson'/'Ricky Sings Again'/'Songs by Ricky'/'More Songs by Rick'/'Rick is 21'/'Album 7'/'For Your Sweet Love'/'For You'/'The Very Thought of You'/'Spotlight on Rick'/'Best Always'/'Love and Kisses'/'Another Side of Rick'. For further info, send for Zigzag back issues 45/46/47. Note also that 'Rick Nelson Country', a re-issue of 'Country Fever' and 'Bright Lights and Country Music' should be available as an MCA import.

GRAM PARSONS	'GPI'	(Reprise)
	'Grievous Angel'	(Reprise)
	Both due for re-release. get 'em.	
JOHN PHILLIPS	'The Wolfking of LA'	(ABC)
ELVIS PRESLEY	'On Stage'	(RCA)
	'At Madison Square Garden'	(RCA)
	'Aloha from Hawaii'	(RCA)
	'Now'	(RCA)
	'Live on stage in Memphis'	(RCA)

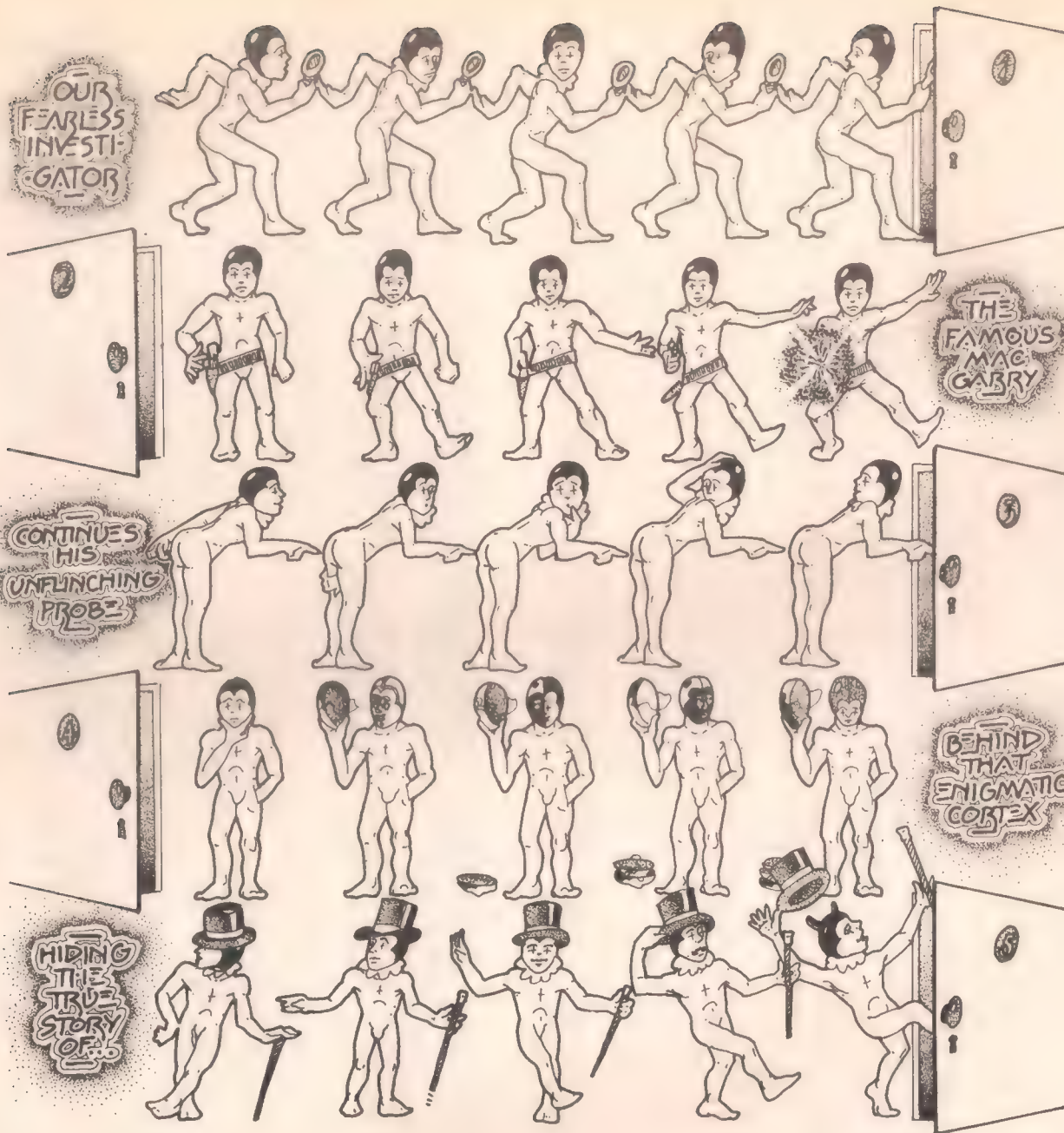
There are probably several more Elvis albums on which James features, but it's worth noting that he isn't used exclusively. Both Chip Young ('I can help') and Jerry Reed ('Guitar Man') allegedly played on the Presley versions of those songs.

JOHNNY RIVERS	'Realisation of Mr Beelzebub'	(UA)
	'Slim Sto Slider'	(UA)
	Recommended	
JOHN STEWART	'Sunstorm'	(Warner)
BOBBY VEE	'Live on tour'	(UA)
	Not in fact a live album	
JONI MITCHELL	'For the roses' (one track)	(Asylum)
DELANEY & BONNIE	'Genesis'	(London)
THE HAGERS	'The Hagers'	(Elektra)
JAN AND DEAN	'Save for a rainy day'	(CBS)
	(Unissued. Their last LP, according to The Rock Marketplace magazine)	
MONKEES	'Last train to Clarksville'	(Various)
	May be on others, but Emory Gordy, who supplied info, can't be too sure.	
JACK JONES	'Harbour'	(RCA)
JOHN HARTFORD	'John Hartford'	(RCA)
P F SLOAN	'Raised on records' (one track)	(Mums)
WAYLON JENNINGS	'The country side of'	(A&M)
	Rocky thinks so, anyway.	
RANDY NEWMAN	'The first album'	(Reprise)
MICHAEL NESMITH	'Nevada Fighter'	(RCA)
LEE HAZLEWOOD	'Love and other crimes'	(Reprise)
DALE HAWKINS	'LA Memphis & Tyler, Texas'	(Bell)
JAMES HENDRICKS	'Songs Of'	(Liberty)
HOYT AXTON	'My griffin is gone'	(CBS)
	'Life Machine'	(A&M)
LONGBRANCH PENNY WHISTLE	'Longbranch Pennywhistle'	(Amos)

Various pieces of info also indicate that James may well have recorded with Billy Lee Riley, Johnny Tillotson, David Cassidy, Buck Owens, the Everly Brothers, Herb Alpert, Frank and Nancy Sinatra, Andy Williams, Leon Russell, Area Code 615, and possibly hundreds more. It's also worth noting that our skimpy entries on such as Merle Haggard and Waylon Jennings, not forgetting Elvis, are likely to be woefully incomplete. Nevertheless, for what it's worth, here's a © 1976 mark, and please send in your additions and corrections. John Tobler



Tom Sheehan



though no-one had admitted as much, it hardly took the reasoning power of Sam Spade to deduce, with a certain amount of confidence, that I was about to witness a rehearsal of the re-formed Kaleidoscope, when Darrow came over to collect me from Perrin's about 2 in the afternoon of the following day, and, indeed, during the drive to a converted barn in Opici, he confided that Kaleidoscope had already recorded an album — more of which later — and were in the process of working up a set for their debut performance in San Diego some twelve days hence.

As I walked in the door, it struck me that my initial confrontation must've been something akin to Darrow's own introduction to them nine years ago — that was until I heard the Turk muttering; in a screened alcove, huddled up around a table drinking coffee, was a cluster of people looking at me with studied indifference. Unaware of whether Darrow wished to discuss any preliminary matters with them before introducing me, I had lingered to examine an interesting mural depicting a "nude across Hudson Terraplane", when I clearly heard the swarthy gentleman, whom I took to be Solomon Feldthouse, ask rather tartly "who's the cunt in the sailor's hat?" As I appeared to be the only person sporting nautical headgear, I assumed this to be a reference to my good self.

In reality, however, Sol turned out to be just as pleasant and good-humoured as the rest of them — though he did lose his patience, if not his temper, when I later asked him about "the rumours".

Ever since Zigzag was invented, I have heard the most preposterous stories about Kaleidoscope, circulating in oral tradition among the multitude of rather bizarre rock freaks we've come into contact with over the years. As for myself, caring little for the mysteries and music of Kaleidoscope (as I said earlier), I must confess the existence of a great cleft in my rock knowledge. I know next to nothing about the group — but I felt I ought to counter him with some of the rumours (as jotted down by Frame for just this purpose).

"Is it true," I asked, "that once, in a fit of drug-induced fury, you drew a scimitar from the scabbard you wore during performances and had to be physically restrained from hacking at your amplifier?"

"No", he replied evenly.

"Is it true that the band posted a ten thousand dollar reward for any KSAF listener who brought in the carcass, dead or alive, of Templeton Parcele?"

"Certainly not," Feldthouse spluttered, "...look, I don't know where you got all this stupid shit, but...."

His tone bore enough finality and animosity to prevent my making further enquiries along this line, so I never did find out about the animals he used to bring along to rehearsals to alarm the others.

Now if you saw the cassettes and notes that I came back with after my six days in Kaleidoscope Country, you'd know what a fuck of a job I had shuffling everything into a coherent order. (Is it coherent? I certainly hope so.....Christ, it took me long enough). Missing out all the hours of trivia that I considered least interesting to you good readers, I attempted to weave the remainder into an article where chronological sequence is retained as much as possible — but if things get jumbled — well, I'm sorry....you'll just have to try reading it twice or something.

So, after four pages of introductory pre-ambls, we have actually reached the point when I can begin the story of Kaleidoscope. (Ed: Thank God for that).

KALEIDOSCOPE were:
DAVID LINDLEY — lead guitar, fiddle, harp-guitar and vocals
SOLOMON FELDTHOUSE — guitar, cag, ovd, bass and vocals
FENRUS EPP — fiddle, harmonium, organ, harp, bass and vocals
CHRIS DARROW — bass, guitar, fiddle, mandolin, vocals
JOHN VIDICAN — drums, percussion.

David Lindley, just prior to his forming Kaleidoscope, had played briefly with a short-lived San Bernardino group called The Rodents — "a blatant but pale imitation" of the Beatles, whose records and motion pictures seemed to be the only context within which their minds could operate. And of course, playing a restricted rhythm guitar in a dead end band was patently not a suitable role for a fellow whose spheres of musical knowledge out-rank those of Robin Ray.

The time is September 1966, "when" says Lindley, "I decided to get together with Sol and Fenrus and experiment with a music which could combine various other musical areas with rock.... to see if we could come up with something new and interesting — but our working knowledge of exactly what constituted an electric band was negligible. I mean, we didn't want a conventional group, but we did need to work similar gigs at a similar power.... So rather than waste a lot of time learning everything from scratch, we decided to call in an expert. After all, an ounce of practice is worth a ton of theory. So I called Chris, who not only knew about electric music, but was also ideal for the group in terms of instrumental and vocal prowess".

Darrow: "I was still involved in academics at the time, and among other things, I was in charge of hanging all the art shows in the college gallery. I was bang in the middle of hanging an exhibition — it was a selection of works illustrating the Howard Pyle school of painting, I remember — when I got David's phone message.... and like I said, I jumped at the invitation — though I kept up my studies for the first few months".

"Chris had no idea just how unstable the band was at the time," said Fenrus, who had joined Lindley after a spell with the Indestructible Old Ticky String Band (the remains of which later evolved into a rock group called Shrimp Boat, which Epp — and Paul Lagos — subsequently rejoined in 1973). "The group, which we called Kaleidoscope, had actually been signed by Epic Record — sight unseen! They gave us a contract without seeing us play — on the strength of one demo track we'd sent in.... Can you imagine that?"

I couldn't — and told Fenrus. "That is absolutely fucking true" he assured me, "...and there wasn't even a real band in existence. None of the guys involved had played enough electric music to be able to pull it off, and put it across — so we got Chris in".

Darrow: "My function, it was explained to me, was to sing and play bass, but more importantly to pull it all together. We rehearsed for 2 or 3 months straight. It was the first time I'd met John or Fenrus or Sol — but David told me they were guys he'd hand-picked to play with. Two came from the same area as David; Fenrus was from Pasadena and John was living there at the time — but Sol was from much further afield. He liked to be thought of as a Turkish mystic, but we later found out that he'd been born in a place called Costaquana. Mind you, I'd prefer you didn't make that public knowledge without his consent".

In fact, pursuing Darrow's mention of Costaquana, I discovered the reason for the trail of red herrings Sol has littered across his past. Apparently (and he doesn't object to my writing this), his grandfather, one Gian Battista, had been the hero of the wars preceding the birth of a republic somewhere on the Tierra Firme seaboard of the gulf of Mexico. Battista's son (Sol's father) had been born some weeks after Battista had accidentally been shot dead by his father-in-law. Sol's grandmother had thereafter adopted a nomadic lifestyle, though the family periodically returned home. For

1. The Rodents recorded an allegedly dire single on the Pequot label — "And your bird can sing / Come and live with me". I'd be glad of any information on this, and will pay through the nose for a copy in any condition. Ms. I will pay more. Pp.

political reasons (the nature of which he wouldn't disclose), Sol would offer no information as to the real name and exact geographical location of "home", though he mentioned a coastal town called Sulaco, and said "it's all in the book". I haven't a clue what he was talking about, and have been unable to find either "Sulaco" or "Costaquana" in any gazetteer.

John Vidican ("a young cat with potential who didn't mind going along with the flow", according to Darrow), was, Fenrus insists, brought into the group by him rather than Lindley: "Vidican had recently quit the Children of God and was attempting to lead a new life. He was engaged in menial duties at a private sanatorium in Los Angeles, which is where I met him. I was recuperating from a liver and was enchanted to find that my ward orderly was actually a student of good music; we used to have long discussions about the relative merits of John Coltrane and Yusef Lateef".

Some of the things this Fenrus Epp/Chester Crill character told me were, my instincts told me, rather suspect in terms of veracity. I put it to Darrow: "Is the fellow to be believed?" I asked. "Well, there are things he stretches, but mainly he tells the truth", Darrow replied — and we attributed my suspicions to the fact that Epp is just a very weird bugger.

In point of fact, they were all very weird buggers.

Epp's love of curiosities came from his father, the author of 2 apparently respected volumes, "Curiosities of American Literature", and his love of music came from his "romantic nature", so he says. Like most eccentrics, he is fascinating to listen to.... and to observe. For instance, I caught him bent over a large table, sniffing at a bowl of apples, and, on noticing that I was watching, he casually observed that "on the whole, I prefer the perfume of fruit, even to that of flowers — it is more mystic and thrilling; more rapturous". Speechless, I could only nod in agreement.

Apart from Epp's revelation and what can be gleaned from the brief words on the sleeve of the first album, John Vidican's pre-Kaleidoscope days must remain a mystery, because he is not involved with the re-formed group and none of the others really knew all that much about him — and if Solomon had anything to do with it, his past would also remain obscure. When I first asked him about his origins, he asked me what I already knew, and I meekly listed the following "facts" which I had assembled from various sources:
1. Born of a gypsy family in Ismit, Turkey.
2. Born of a Jewish family in Wyoming.
3. Served in the U.S. Navy.
4. Was previously in a flamenco dancing troupe.
5. Lived in Idaho and Florida.

"There might be a grain of truth in there somewhere — but no more than that," he said, obviously having not the slightest intention of divulging where the truth, if any, lay.

Fortunately, Darrow was more helpful: "Solomon is still enigmatic to me in a lot of ways, but he was certainly the first beatnik I ever knew". (None of the band was a hippie in the real sense of the word, even though the band's arrival was roughly concurrent with the rise of hippie-ism in Southern California). "When I first joined the group, Sol was living in a Volks wagen bus, then he lived in a 5-car garage behind his mother-in-law's house in Temple City. He used to stay up all night, playing his cag to TV programmes — then he wouldn't get up until about 2 the next afternoon".

"It was like seeing a phoenix rise from the ashes to see him get out of his bed", Fenrus recalls, "...he had this cardboard coloured skin and no eyes when he first woke up".

According to the sleeve of 'Side Trips', Sol was formerly a photographer, and his influences are people I have never heard of: Osman Gokche, Emin Gunduz and George Pappas. "The most exciting experience of his career" is noted as "playing with Carmen Amaya", and his hobbies are listed as

"women and music". That's funny - they're the same as mine.

Darrow: "Sol is a guy that I grew to appreciate and miss more and more after I left Kaleidoscope; his interest in traditional music, including American, was so intense - and his voice is certainly unique. Fenrus and I were more aligned in the rock'n'roll sense, but Solomon didn't like it much...in fact, he hated it and had to resign himself to playing it. His preference was playing long middle-eastern things, which as a bass player, kind of bored me....but we were all pretty gentlemanly and democratic about things. There was a lot of respect within that band - in the early days particularly."

I must say that the music on the first album, 'SIDE TRIPS' (Epic BN 26304), released in June 1967, is both brilliant and without precedent. Despite my comic dismissal of Kaleidoscope's recorded work earlier in this article (inserted merely to stimulate some pene reaction), I feel that their first two albums are great.

I shall now pause to eat, drink and re-consider 'SIDE TRIPS' in the light of recent repeated playing, following my return to semi-civilisation.

Sitting here crouched over this miserable Phillips fan heater (when only days ago I was lying half naked and smashed in fate Thomas's back garden in Santa Monica), gulping great draughts of red biddy from a bottle I popped into my bag at a recent Ronnie Scotts' reception, toying with some Marks and Sparks Fisherman's Pie, and paying precious little attention to Mr Frank Bough (features alert with interest, as ever) discussing ultra-sonic child-birth scanners on Nationwide. "Mr Bough", I think to myself, "you are living in another world; a world characterised by trivial tales of dormice living in car upholstery, stories of villagers impelled to improvise during local runner-bean droughts, reports from personable reporters seeking anything which will hold the proles' attention as he gawks at the telly between mouthfuls of beefburgers (or Fisherman's Pie, even)." "Has Bough ever even heard of Kaleidoscope?" I muse. "Is 'A Beacon from Mars' a constant visitor to his turntable?" "Is all this inconsequential rubbish doomed to be edited out by a Swift slash of Frame's blue pencil?" (Ed: no - but bloody well get on with it.)

'SIDE TRIPS' has ten tracks totalling only 26 minutes and 6 seconds, making it one of the Great Short Records of Our Time.....rivaling The International Submarine Band, clocking in at 25:40, and Tim Hardin 2, at 22:38. Still, 26 minutes of vintage Kaleidoscope is infinitely preferable to the entire Fye 'Golden Hour' catalogue.

I'd better list the tracks, due to the album's rarity - so you'll know what we're talking about. (Though you must see the end of this series for the Mac Garry plan to make the album available to Zigzag readers!).

Side One:
'Egyptian Gardens' (Feldthouse)
'If the night' (Darrow)
'Hesitation Blues' (Charlie Poole)
'Please' (Feedman/Feldthouse)
'Keep your mind open' (Darrow)

Side Two:
'Pulsating Dream' (Darrow)
'Oh Death' (J. Reedy)
'Come on in' (Lindley)
'Why Try?' (Lindley)
'Minnie the Moocher' (Calloway/Mills/Gaskill)

Even in the opening bars, one hears "all that Persian bullshit" as John Landau called it - and, much as it appeals to me - I must say that I prefer their non-Persian stuff. The Music Hall/Jugbandy stuff too tends to become a trifle tiresome after 40 playings (though I do like the singer's exhortations to the soloist in the middle of 'Hesitation Blues', and the superbly screeching fiddle and instruction to "Shake it for Cab" near the end of 'Minnie the Moocher'). My favourites are the straighter, Californian efforts, like 'If the night', 'Oh Death', 'Pulsating Dream' and the classic Kaleidoscope track, as far as I'm concerned: 'Please', which carried their hopes when Epic put it out as a single.

Darrow: "It got mentioned, and reviewed well - but it went nowhere. The lyrics were by Mark Feedman, who'd been in the Rodents with David, and was still hanging out with



Chris Darrow laughs heartily at one of Mac's hilarious jokes, on the road to Opici

him now and then, and Sol provided the melody - but the song didn't click....not for us, nor for Hearts and Flowers, who also recorded it". 2

The b-side of 'Please', 'Elevator Man', which was never on an album, was another song by Sol - a real rock'n' roller, with one of Lindley's best ever guitar parts and one of Darrow's best bass lines....a really inventive track.



The second single - another chart dud - was a remix of 'Why Try' (off the album) with double-tracked harmonies added in a vain attempt to make it a commercial hit, backed by a very different version of 'Little Orphan Annie' from that which appeared on the 'Bernice' album some years later. Darrow reckons the A-side remix didn't really come off, but he loves the b-side, which I have never heard. Darrow: "Fenrus and I wrote that between us. I had worked out this melody in a kind of funny time, and he wrote the words - about Carol Doda, and Basil Rathbone. David did the vocals on that."

To return to the album, let us take a peek at its producer - one Barry Friedman....later to disappear and re-emerge under the

2. So did Election - twice. When Dorris Henderson replaced Kerrilee Male, she overdubbed a new vocal, and the single was re-released. (Does anyone have a copy, please?)

nomme-de-plume (or should I say nomme-de-Studio) of Frazier Mohawk. Lindley: "He wasn't an Epic staff producer - he was an independent guy - always nosing around and coming up with ideas....like he put the Buffalo Springfield together, and he essentially discovered the Kaleidoscope. He was one of those guys who was able to see things in their raw state, and through his imagination, project how they could become in say 3 or 4 years time."

"I love Barry very much" says Darrow, pouring out his heart, "but I think it's fair to say that he floated out of the picture because it was felt that he was over-producing us; he wanted to do so much as a producer, and we wanted to do so much as a band....and our creative ideas weren't working parallel....the liaison wasn't always there."

"He was a great guy though; had some really good pioneering ideas. He was responsible for that ranch/recording studio that Elektra built - Rhinoceros used to record there, and Jackson (Browne) cut his first tracks there....it was an interesting idea but, for some reason, nothing much came out of there except a Holy Modal Rounders album and a few other things."

"Denny Bruce was a good friend of his; Denny used to live with Neil Young, and the Springfield thing had started out almost as a family situation."

"Barry and Michael Goldberg (who ended up being our manager) took care of the record deal with Epic - but I'm hazy about the details because I came in after it had been finalised. I didn't see any of the negotiation stages; the deal had already been cemented."

Fenrus: "Yeah, Barry was a really good guy - super nice. Actually, he was a professional clown; he could eat fire, swallow swords and all that stuff. I saw him eating fire on the Jonathan Winters show one night. But Barry was able to take the rawness of the group and project it on the first album, which I think is an excellent record."

Even glancing at the titles of his compositions would give one the impression that Darrow was EXPERIMENTING WITH DRUGS TO EXPAND THE MIND.

3. Hence his name in big letters on the sleeve of 'Buffalo Springfield Again'.

"My Songs do seem to be psychotropically orientated" he says, "but in fact I was probably the least involved with drugs in the band. An interesting thing about one of those songs, 'Pulsating Dream', is that it originally had a whole other set of lyrics - but, though I'm still credited as sole composer, David and Solomon decided to transpose it into psychedelic terms to make it more acceptable and accessible to the modern market. The words of the recorded song are the product of an afternoon's concerted effort to make it the most "psychedelic" track on the album."

"As it happens" says Darrow - a hint of rancour creeping below his smile, "I think their words are a load of shit....absolute shit - but they were perfect for the time, so I can live with them now....and I love the backing track."

"I'm much more proud of 'Keep your mind open'. I love the backing track on that one too, and I'm very pleased with the way the voice sounds....I like that song a lot; I thought it said a lot without really saying a lot, if you see what I mean. It was Jackson Browne's favourite song that we did, as well."

Solomon Feldthouse offered an interesting piece of trivia when I asked him about the sleeve. "We were originally calling ourselves The Baghdad Blues Band, for want of a better name, and then Barry came up with Kaleidoscope, and the album title 'Side Trips'. I think you could call the sleeve design 'rudimentary psychedelic'; it was done by the guy who did all the covers for the ESP label. Without any disrespect to him, we wanted something incredible. When they showed us the art work, we didn't like it - we wanted something else....but it was too late. Poor us! Then we were led to believe it was going to have colour on the back. This we took to mean a full colour photo job - but it was just a different colour ink....a whole bunch of notes in blue ink!"

Actually, the sleeve note is surprisingly informative considering it stemmed from

the pen of pop chronicler Arnold Shaw - one of the laziest ducks ever to waddle down Tin Pan Alley. From it we learn a fair amount of fact and info - including the following:

David Lindley was born in LA in 1944 and raised in San Marino, California. His favourite composers are Harry Partch, Bartok, Bach, Rodrigo, John Cage, A.C. Jobim, Django Reinhardt. He likes sincere girls, 2 tone shoes, cheese cake, old guitars, privacy, clean air and soccer. Fenrus Epp, formerly a book and camera clerk likes Jaki Byard, Django Reinhardt, John Coltrane and Yusuf Lateef.

Nevertheless, it's a bit of a dry old sleeve note....I can't be bothered to copy out any more off it.

I mentioned that the influence of other LA groups like the Byrds was noticeable but that their music spanned a much wider base. "Well, we liked those groups....I did anyway" proclaims Darrow. "I met McGuinn through Richard Greene during the Disneyland days, but I'd never got to know him - though Chris Hillman had been a friend since the days of the Scottsville Squirrel Barkers. I can remember him telling me, in a very condescending sort of way, that he had joined a rock group....it was sort of "oh, I've grown out of bluegrass now" - though he'd still come to see us (the 'Scat Band') at the Ash Grove."

To get a historical perspective, 'Side Trips' came out at the same time as The Beatles 'Sgt Pepper' and Scott McKenzie's 'San Francisco'....it was the month of the Monterey Festival.

Bits of 'Side Trips' sound alarmingly archaic, 9 years on; for instance, Sol's 'Please' contains the immortal line "I've got to do my own thing"....but these were PIONEERING DAYS. And I think that's where Kaleidoscope's major claim to fame....they were pioneers. They were the wagon trains of Zigzag Rock, rolling across all that uncharted land in search of the unknown, the undreamed of. Before long, of course, at least a thousand and one bands had stamped in the

grooves of their wheels.

My academic career had finally ground to a halt halfway towards my masters degree - but I was still teaching, and working part-time. Darrow. "When that first album came out, we thought we were well on the way to success....until we came to the realisation that not too many people could understand what we were about. The single went nowhere, the album went nowhere, and the group went nowhere....and it was something of a shock. I mean, we really thought that 'Side Trips' was going to appeal to a lot of people rather than the handful that bought it."

As my ex-neighbour Lord Chalfont (on a totally unrelated matter, of course) once said to me: "it is dangerous to discount the power of dedicated minorities". Not that the remark has much relevance here; a dedicated minority wants to see the album re-released, whilst CBS stand resolute in their refusal. Tobler, during his 20 months at CBS, was constantly lobbying them to put out the first 2 Kaleidoscopes as a budget double - but the powers-that-be were confident that this could only constitute a foolish waste of money. (Of the four Kaleidoscope albums, only the worst was released here).

We shall see, when the Great Album Critic in the Sky makes his final appraisals; Where will the Rollers be then? In the disposable dustbin where they belong - that's where! History is made by minorities; Solomon Feldthouse knew all about that.

MAC

Ed: This tedium (we hope and pray) will be concluded next issue.

Heading: Chris Morton. Scribe: Pete Frame

4. This has to be bullshit.



Their debut album
on MCA Records
featuring their single
'OUT OF YOUR HEAD'
MCA 236

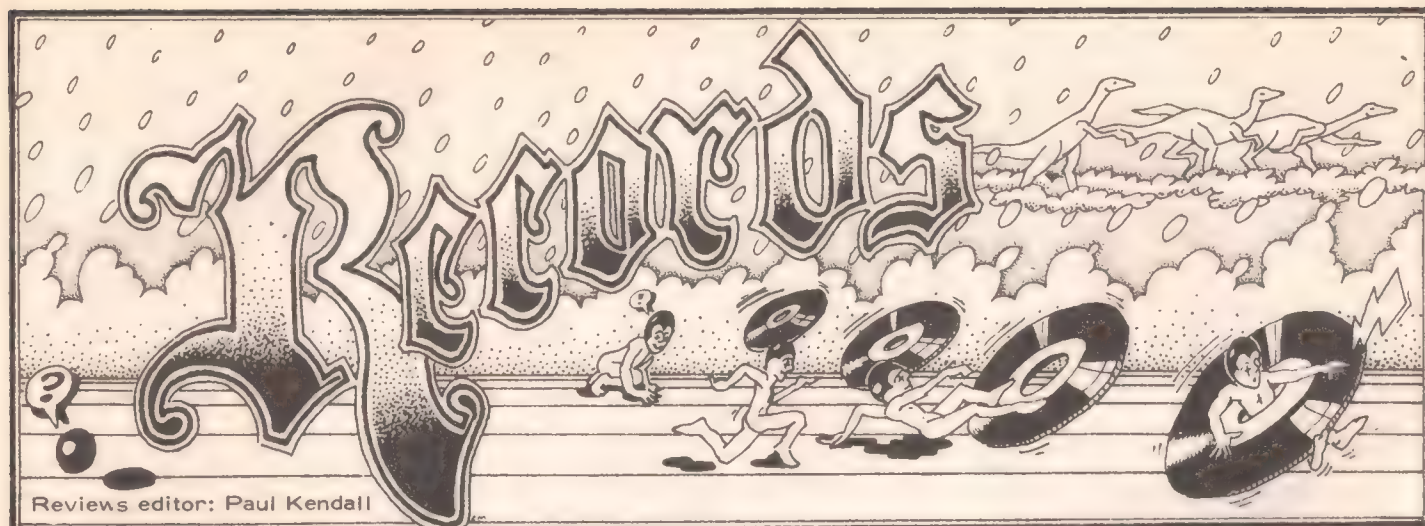
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'At the Sound of the Bell'
PAVLOV'S DOG
Columbia PC 33964 (Import)

Hellfire, this is as depressing a piece of vinyl as I've listened to in many a full moon. After one of the most exciting debut albums in recent history, I was positively drooling in anticipation of this, the Dog's second effort, especially as Sandy Pearlman himself told me that it would be even better than 'Pampered Menial'. But Oh! - the gnashing of teeth and rending of hair, my brethren - this record turns out to be a flaccid bore, and Pavlov's Dog reveal themselves as wimps in monsters' clothing.

It would appear that while we thought 'Pampered Menial' was stylistically innovative, compositionally brilliant, and aggressively exciting, all David Surkamp really wanted to do was strum an acoustic guitar and sing weedy songs about his woman troubles while his mates tastefully and discreetly made a pleasant musical back-drop and slipped in the occasional polite solo.

Talk among yourselves, please, while I play 'Pampered Menial' just to reassure myself. . . . yes, it's brilliant - I even caught myself thrashing the air with my arms in demented Keith Moon fashion. . . . a sure sign I'm getting off on a record. Since that was made, there have been a few changes in the Dog's home; drummer Mike Safron is out - apparently because he wasn't good enough (though you'd never have guessed it from the first album), and so is loony violinist Siegfried Carver, who was a bit of a problem because the only music he liked was quasi-classical stuff. In their place we find one William Bradford on drums (they've all started us-

ing their full names by the way - a suspicious move), various people sitting in on guitars, saxes, etc, and would you believe the High Wycombe Boys Choir and the Mountain Fjord Orchestra? Oh yes, and a gentleman called Thomas Nickeson on acoustic guitar and harmonies - which is a pretty fair indication of the drift of things.

Most of the elements contributing to 'Pampered Menial's greatness are there - the unique lead vocals, the majestically soaring mellotrons, the dynamic peaks and valleys, the distinctive Pavlov's Dog sound - but all done with so much less urgency than on the first, and the texturing has become predom inantly acoustic - guitar and piano - with a resulting dissipation of electricity, both in sound and feel. Moreover, most of the numbers are half-done, or more, before any real build-up occurs, which throws the emphasis on Surkamp's songs, which aren't really all that great with only simple arrangements. . . . especially the lyrics, which they've chosen to print on the inner sleeve this time.

In fact, Surkamp gets a monopoly of the songwriting this time, whereas Steve (sorry, Stephen) Scorfina contributed a brace of excellent numbers to the first, and Mike Safron wrote 'Song Dance', which was also very good. As I said before, they're almost all love songs, and pretty wet at that: "You were the best girl

That I ever knew
And Mersey I'll just save my
love for you".

That sort of stuff predominates, except on 'Did you see him cry', the best track, which has quite a good lyric about an old guy plagued by memories in his twilight years, and is by far the most coherent and stimulating thing on the album. Elsewhere, 'Valkerie' starts off well, but outstays its welcome with a tedious coda, 'Try to hang on' sounds like Sparks (aaaaarghhhh!), and 'Early Morning On' builds up a sufficient head of steam to distract attention from some exceedingly crappy lyrics, but the rest is really rather unexceptional - a word I never expected to use in connection with Pavlov's Dog.

The cover is dynamite; a Quasimodo impersonator swinging merrily in his bell tower on the front, and then feeling the inevitable headache on the back - and Max Bell gets a name-drop. . . . but they're the highlights on what is hopefully only a temporary derailment. If this is anything to go by,

the next Blue Oyster Cult album will sound like Loggins and Messina - may Hades help us all. Paul Kendall



MALLARD
Virgin V2045

The formation of Mallard from the hot ashes of Captain Beefheart's last Magic Band and the subsequent recording of this album was ably chronicled by Connor McKnight in Zigzag 53. . . and his drooling enthusiasm over the unfinished tapes left me waiting with bated breath for the finished product. As expected, it's a right corker!

Bill Harkleroad (formerly Zoot Horn Rollo) has taken the reins as composer, musical director and producer. He plays all the guitars, too. On the evidence of this amazing album I find it hard to believe Beefheart when he says he taught this bloke to play. If he did, then old Bill has been hiding his talents under a Beefheartian bushel 'cos this album is an understated masterpiece. The music is heavily rooted in the Old West and American desert but is laced throughout by the eccentric virtuosity of Bill, Mark Boston (remember Rockette Morton?) and Artie Tripp III.

Comparisons with former albums are inescapable, so I'll get it over with. True, the band is recognisable as the quirkily brilliant bunch who graced 'Lick my decals off, baby' but Mallard sound like no-one else but Mallard. This is mainly due to the songs, which are simple on the outside but conceal a multitude of hidden goodies. Be-monocled Artie Tripp III still thrashes everything in sight with syn-copated abandon while Mark Boston gurgles around him on bass. And Bill is still splintering the sky with brain splattering slide solos. But their playing is contained within the new,



A Genius in Focus

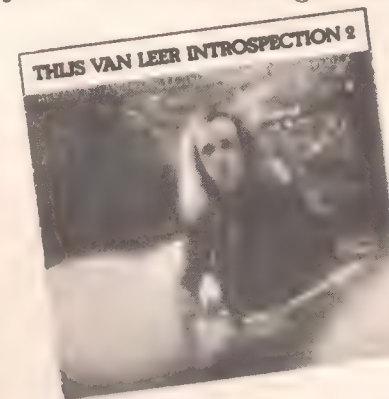
After studying at the Amsterdam Conservatory, THIJS VAN LEER formed Focus.

Soon after he was proclaimed a major solo artist with the release, and success of his first album: 'Introspection'. Now comes the second coinciding with his nationwide tour with Focus: 'Introspection II' ...the exploration of exciting and demanding new directions.

It confirms once again his ability as a flute player. It shows, most of all, his remarkable sense of style and form: his genius.



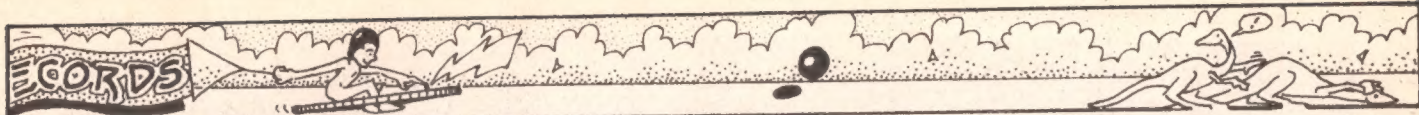
'INTROSPECTION'
CBS 64589



'INTROSPECTION II'
CBS 65915

Two remarkable solo
albums from
THIJS VAN LEER

on  Records & Tapes



earthier direction of Bill's music. New vocalist Sam Galpin's voice is another property exclusive to Mallard. Now, the prospect of someone else fronting this band successfully after the Captain must seem a bit remote, but former bar-crooner Sam fits in well, even if he does sound like he's been up for six nights gargling with gravel. His naturally gruff tones will obviously draw many comparisons. Sam claims he has never heard Beefheart, but I find that rather difficult to believe as on several occasions he could even pass for The Man Himself. But wisely, Sam never goes out of his depth and emerges with a gutsy style of his own.

He shines on 'Desperadoes waiting for a train', which is incidentally the only non-Magic Band song on the album (it was written by Guy Clark and Jim Dickenson and was recorded by Tom Rush a year or so back). The track has a hot dusty charm, enhanced by the famous out of tune piano vividly described by Connor.

The album encompasses many moods ranging from the crazed acoustic springiness of the opening track, 'Back on the pavement', to the spacey desert feel of the atmospheric 'South of the valley'. In between, there are delicate instrumentals like 'Yellow' and a pastoral re-working of 'Peon', which was recorded beside a river in Devon, where the record was cut last year. There's a wild instrumental, 'Road to Morocco', where Artie's marimba and the guitars carve out menacing melodies... or even 'Winged Tuskadero' where Mark informs us that he's been flying "where the glass insects sing" over a lurching rhythm.

The band shine best when they are tackling unison riffs and counter riffs with customary ease - but still they manage to raise hell. Just listen to 'Reign of pain' or 'She's long and she's lean', and you'll see what I mean. Both tracks have that loping lurch rhythm, and burst with staccato riffs and sudden time changes. 'She's long' features Bill's best guitar solo (despite many other whizzers), and his playing sometimes puts me in mind of Lowell George's work... numbers like 'One day once' and 'A piece of me' evoke the laid back complexity of 'The last record album'. Silence is used as an instrument - hear Bill zoom back into his solo like a swooping hawk on 'A piece of me', which has a dark windswept feel and a great piano from guest player Rabbit.

It has to be said: Mallard are going to take off. Buy this album!

I wonder if their name has any remote connection with Mr Vliet's Christian name? Kris Needs

KATE & ANNA MCGARRIGLE
Warner Bros K56218

By now most of you have already checked this album out on the strength of the rave reviews that everyone from the NME to the Barnsley Argus has been giving it, but for those amongst us only recently driven from their hermits' cells in Northern Scotland by advancing oil pipelines, or returned from armed service overseas, I shall have my little say in



favour of this quite exquisite record.

The McGarrigle sisters are already familiar to obsessive album-credit perusers such as myself, since both Maria Muldaur and Linda Ronstadt have recorded their songs, and on that evidence alone, an expectation of good material on their own offering was not unreasonable, but surely no one could have been ready for the sheer quality and beauty that it exudes in every department.

It's one of those rare records on which technical excellence and the warmth of apparent spontaneity blend into something which is at once aesthetically satisfying and emotionally tangible. As you might suppose, the production by Joe Boyd (he of so many excellent Witchseason and Woodstock albums) and Greg Prestopino is immaculate, but, unlike so many immaculate productions these days, it loses nothing of the intimacy and feeling which these songs demand. The arrangements run the whole gamut of homespun music, from a simple guitar or keyboard accompaniment to a whole bunch of friends helping out on vocals and various instruments, but in every case the harmonies and arrangements, although obviously prepared with loving care, slip in and out of the songs with a relaxed ease and an unobtrusive rightness that gives the album a living room rather than a studio atmosphere.

The accompaniments on the album are an interesting blend of well known session men like Stephen Gadd and David Spinoza, famous friends such as Lowell George and Andrew Gold, and a host of less famous friends, but they are always a delightful embellishment, rather than a distraction from the even more delightful songs and singing of the sisters McGarrigle.

Side one is a start-to-finish killer, an emotive tour-de-force that will leave only hearts of stone unmoved. The six songs - three by Kate, two by Anna, and 'Foolish You' by a friend called Wade Hemsworth - have a (probably quite unwitting) thematic unity which turns them into a sort of Suite Goodbye, comprising sad stories full of heartbreak and desire for lost faces and places, love on the rocks, and aching homesickness. Without wishing to fall into the trap of 'Rolling Stone' style psychoanalysis, Kate seems to be the more urban and worldly of the sisters and brings a greater resilience to her relationships, while Anna is more vulnerable, and the treatment of their songs underlines

this perfectly, emphasising the almost stately, hymnal simplicity of Anna's songs, while showing a wider range of influences in Kate's. Particularly outstanding are Anna's 'Heart Like A Wheel', taken at a slower pace than Linda Ronstadt's interpretation to a simple organ accompaniment - played, incidentally, by sister Janie - which brings out the desolation in the song to an almost unbearable degree, and Kate's 'Talk to me of Mendocino', which immediately joins the ranks of immortal hymns of praise to the great American continent. Really though, the whole side is a finely wrought tapestry of sights, feelings and impressions, and the strength of that whole is greater than the power or beauty of any individual songs, considerable though they are.

Not surprisingly, the second side doesn't equal the breath-taking heights or awful abysses of the first, but there is still some lovely stuff. Loudon Wainwright's 'Swimming Song' is taken at a rollicking hoedown pace - a rare moment of levity on what is predominantly an album of melancholy passion - 'Complainte pour Ste-Catherine' has lovely, lilting, accordian dominated Frenchness, and Kate's 'Tell my sister' boasts a fine alto-sax solo by Plas Johnson, before going into a very cool, Noel Cowardish conclusion that complements the 'farewell to Olde England' theme, but this very variety makes the second side less compelling than the cohesiveness of side one.

Basically, however, the album is a joy, and the fact that something of such honesty, intimacy, subtlety and quality can be produced, released and acclaimed purely on the strength of its intrinsic merits is a source of great comfort in these trying times. As Fat John the Conqueror would say, you ignore it at your own cost. Paul Kendall



'Live'
ROBIN TROWER
Chrysalis CHR 1089

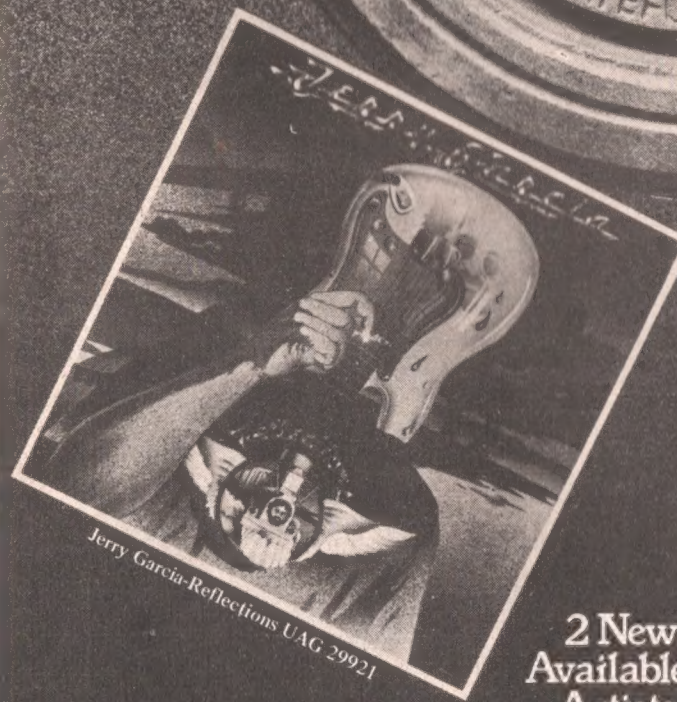
This album, recorded live in Sweden a year ago - and pretty well recorded at that - is unlikely to make any radical difference to Robin Trower's current standing in rock music's scheme of things, where he is a very popular, archetypal "guitar hero" figure to a predominantly male audience in their late teens.

All the seven tracks are live versions of old numbers, three from each of the first two studio albums plus 'Aethra', a stand-out track from 'For

DEAD HEADS UNITE

Jerry Garcia

Kingfish



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Available on United
Artists Records

Probably the most charismatic of all American West Coast musicians, Jerry Garcia is both a legend and an important contemporary artist. His renowned eclecticism and exemplary taste as a guitarist and composer which has been the focal point of the Grateful Dead for years has also been the outstanding feature of a number of concurrent projects including his own solo recording career. This, his third solo album, is the most successful and complete realisation of these qualities and a testimony to his durability and pedigree.



Of all the Grateful Dead off-shoot bands, Kingfish promises to be the most sophisticated, exciting and permanent. With the myriad talents of Bob Weir, Matthew Kelly, Dave Torbert, Chris Herold and Robby Hodinott, they represent the finest and most original brand of music to emerge from San Francisco in years. Their repertoire of original and traditional material, faultless musicianship, and genuinely inspired presentation constitutes a distinguished and memorable debut.

Earth Below', and that suggests that there hasn't been any great change in Robin Trower's music since he left Procol Harum some four years ago, which is, in fact, the case. If you like Robin Trower, then you'll like this album - although whether you'll buy it is another matter, as it won't tell you anything you don't already know. . . . and if, like me, you've always found their music a bit sterile and depressing, then don't hope for any reversal of opinion here.

In brief bursts, it's actually quite exciting, but the basic single voice/single lead instrument format is very limiting and soon becomes wearisomely repetitive, and, after listening to the whole album several times, downright annoying, as the band churns relentlessly along, cymbals clattering, bass rumbling and guitar chattering over the top, as oblivious as a Chieftain tank confronted by pea-shooters.

The people who've hammered Trower in the past for being a Hendrix plagiarist miss the point really. Hendrix was a genius of course, and whilst Trower can't match his manic flair, he is obviously a very good guitarist in his own field, but whereas Hendrix was also an excellent songwriter - particularly on 'Axis Bold As Love' - the Trower Band's compositions often seem to be little more than pegs on which to hang their guitarist's virtuosity, and that is especially true here, where numbers are stretched to six or seven minutes. 'Daydream', from the first album, is the exception - and ironically it's also the longest track on the album; it's a good song, and Trower's long concluding guitar break has a melodic inventiveness that's sadly lacking for the most part among the angry quacking and growling that he offers as solos.

The other members of the band play their parts very efficiently, although I must confess to finding Bill Jordan's obsession with the hissing of several cymbals an irritating distraction, and James Dewar's bass is often obscured in the mix, but the whole affair gives an impression of competence rather than inspiration. Not that good solid artisanship is anything to be sneered at, however, and while this music interests and moves me very little, that doesn't mean it'll have the same effect on you - it may be shattering! Paul Kendall

'Odd Ditties'
KEVIN AYERS
Harvest SHSM 2005

I think it's quite safe to say that Kevin Ayers has spent the greater part of his chequered career trying very hard not to be the huge star that he so obviously could be. He has the verve, panache, elegance and style, not to mention taste and ability, to become an enormous heart-throb rock'n'roll idol, but his cultured sense of irreverence and laziness has prevented him from reaching anything but cult figure status. I mean, how can anyone expect to be famous when they spend nine months of every year lounging around in the south of France or wherever he hangs out?

Regardless of his commercial statu-



ure, however, Kevin Ayers is a very fine singer and an excellent song writer. His last two albums were admittedly somewhat disappointing, but his recorded work on the Harvest label was consistently brilliant, and it's from that period that the material on this album has been compiled.

As the title might conceivably suggest, it's a collection of assorted tracks that have previously only appeared as singles, b-sides, or as in half a dozen cases, not at all. The whole package has been put together with loving care by ace Ayers connoisseur Al Clark, and if it seems obvious why some of the tracks never appeared before and not so obvious why some of the singles weren't huge hits, the whole collection really does gel together remarkably well into a light hearted, esoteric and very enjoyable album.

Especially pleasing is the inclusion of 'Stranger in blue suede shoes' and 'Singing a song in the morning', two singles which I would personally place among his best work; the former a witty laconic song with more than a passing nod of acknowledgement towards Lou Reed's 'Velvet Underground', and the latter a thoroughly infectious tune with lyrics that would sound unbearably banal if not delivered with such boundless enthusiasm and effortless tongue-in-cheek sense of humour.

Also contained herewith are such rarities and goodies as 'Puis Je?' (one of Ayers' more seductive little numbers), an orchestrated and slower version of 'Lady Rachel' than the one on 'Joy of a toy', 'Connie on a rubber band' and the delightful 'Caribbean Moon'.

Playing this album for the first time and attempting to make some notes, I found myself simply writing the word "curious" after every song. . . . and I think that's what Kevin Ayers, because of his attitude and the nature of his music, will always be - a curiosity, but I'd like to imply that as a compliment rather than the non-committal stand-point it usually represents.

As Al Clark has stated in his original and economical sleeve-notes: "Kevin Ayers is thoroughly gifted, consistently engaging and so incorrigibly self-effacing that some of his most inspired material gathers dust while the mediocrities of opportunists flourish". Well thankfully a lot of that material is now available on this

album and the undoubted pleasure to be gained from repeated listenings is here for the taking. Andy Childs

'Frampton Comes Alive'
PETER FRAMPTON
A&M ALML 63703

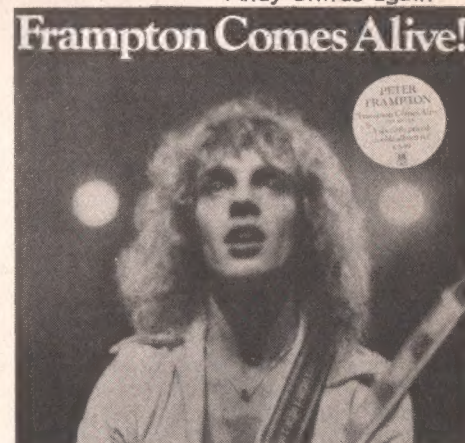
I must confess before I go any further that I'm not very familiar with too many of Frampton's previous solo albums (I've only got one other one) although the stuff that I have heard sounded quite respectable without knocking me sideways. An awful lot of people would appear to feel more strongly about Frampton however, as this album is currently topping the Billboard chart in America and doing monster business.

With his youthful good looks and budding guitar hero image (tasteful, but with distinct heavy-metal inclinations), he seems to have captured a considerable proportion of the American pop and rock audience, including at one end of the scale the pubescent teenybop faction and at the other end, college students who see him as the new British rock guitar supremo. The fact that he manages to please them all and still retain some degree of integrity is highly commendable and quite remarkable, considering how one step too far in either direction could alienate half his audience immediately. He comes pretty close to blowing it a couple of times on this album, mind you, but it is a live album after all, and most of it is, in fact, very good indeed.

Frampton sings his impressive repertoire of songs and plays a mean guitar, his heavy looking band provide suitable accompaniment, and everybody cheers and screams to deafening effect.

The album, a double, was recorded at various venues in America, and the sound is excellent. Frampton devotees will obviously love it, and disbelievers, sceptics, ageing hippies, drunks and degenerates could well be in for a pleasant surprise.

Andy Childs again



In future issues we wish to present a classic album from the past, reviewed by a reader. None of the geezers who write for Zigzag are any more qualified to review albums than you are, so why not have a bash? It'd obviously be a good idea to choose an album which is still available. Send in your efforts with your poll entries. . . . who knows, you may be the next Chris Welch!

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OTHER ALBUMS RECEIVED SINCE THE LAST PRESS DATE:

'Put it in your ear!'

PAUL BUTTERFIELD (Bearsville)
I see what he's doing, but this just isn't a patch on his two magnificent albums with his last group, Better Days (one of the great lost bands). The sleeve is fairly nauseating too.

'Reflections'

JERRY GARCIA (Round Records)
As far as singing goes, I fear that old Geriatric Garcia is past it, poor old feller. He sounds like Ian Hunter singing in his bath, or King Lear

After spending a quarter of an hour working out what I want to say, I've come up with the usual big nothing. It's maybe down to the fact that it's before 10 am, and I'm still somewhat asleep, bathing in the euphoria of having interviewed Bonnie Raitt last night. A very lovely lady, considerably lovelier than several of her album sleeves would have us believe, and also very taken with the Zigzag method of asking about all sorts of obscure details of her past. I hope you all manage to see her on the Old Grey Whistle Test, and that some of you will get to see her live. Pete and I saw her in LA's Troubadour, during our much talked about (by us, that is) trip of two and a half years ago. We are trying to get to California again this year - all we need is the bread.

During that last two and a half years, poor old limping Zigzag has suffered for much of the time, as I'm sure most of you are well aware; 3 different editors, all kinds of aggro, law suits, production problems and all that old crumble, but now we're pretty confident that at last, after 7 years, we've finally got the right combination. Graham Andrews, who now owns the magazine, has displayed an energy which I feel has been lacking in just about everyone who was ever associated in any way with the magazine, and Sue, who I referred to as his old lady, but which Graham nervously amended to "young lady", is getting to grips with the subscriptions and back-issues in a positively dynamic fashion. The outstanding back-issue requests are in a real old state; you see, since young Cheryl left some time last year, poor old Childs just didn't have the time or resources to do everything, and it's to his credit that the magazine came out at all during the last half of 1975 - but Sue is womanfully coping with the backlog, so don't worry.

Speaking of Andy, he's now the Press Officer for United Artists. It's an interesting case of role reversal, as I escaped from the CBS Press Office at the end of last year. Andy is just starting to discover how little time there is in the day, and I'm just beginning to appreciate how much there is....

While I was at CBS, one of the most pleasant and talented artists on the company's books was Mike Batt, whose commercial success has apparently proved a bit of a millstone around his neck, if the comments in the weeklies are anything to go by. Just ponder, if you will, on the pros and cons of limping from day to day,

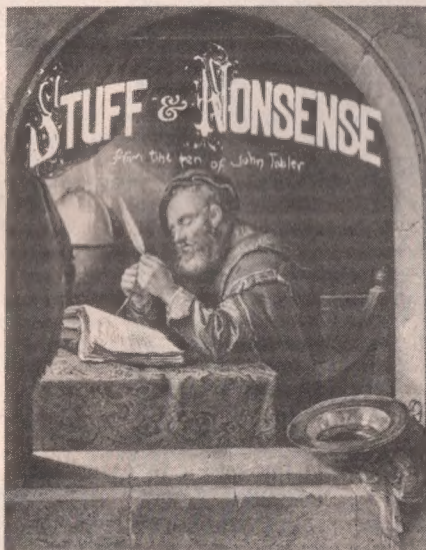
moaning and groaning on the heath.

'Learn to love it!'

JESSE WINCHESTER (Bearsville)
A superb album, well deserving of its re-release by the philanthropic Warner Bros gang.

'Dr Demento's Delights' (Warners)

An engaging little item, containing a bunch of weirdo-weirdo tracks, including the wondrous 'Do you like boobs a lot?' by The Holy Modal Rounders (from their unreleased Metromedia album), 'Friendly neighbourhood narco agent!', 'Who put the benzedrine in Mrs Murphy's ovaltine!'



or succeeding mightily - ask yourself which you'd prefer. Apart from the masochists among you, I suspect you would opt for his path. Anyway, the reason for mentioning Mike Batt is that he has recently started producing records for the Kursaal Flyers, who I'm sure you know are very dear to Zigzag's heart. Their first joint effort is to re-record 'Cruisin For Love', and when you hear it, I think you'll be well pleased. Anybody see the BBC2 documentary on the Kursaaals? I found it a trifle disappointing, in that there was too little music and too much inconsequential chatter. No doubt the theory was that life on the road is very tedious - and if that is what they were trying to convey, they succeeded beyond their wildest dreams... but it left the band as a pretty boring bunch, which is neither fair nor correct.

I bumped into ex-Brinsley Nick Lowe at the Kursaal's gig in Hemel; he was fresh back from California where he and Pete Thomas had been jamming with Clover - ace Marin County band - who have struck up a friendship with the Feelgoods, now ligging and gigging around America. "They were amazed that we knew all the songs" says Nicky, who was over there investigating the possibility of producing an album by ex-Hot Wacks columnist Walter Egan. Nick's also just produced the debut album by Graham Parker & The Rumour (see next Zigzag). Good to see you back on vinyl, Nicky boy!

I've been doing some reviews for the NME lately, as a method of eating, and I'm left with the distinct impression that the majority of halls used to

You can get it by subscribing to Zigzag, or even by buying it.

'THE SONS OF CHAMPLIN' (Ariola)

This bunch smokes more dope than the entire population of Tangier, but still manage to put out an album every 3 or 4 years. Big spread, including interview/facts/info/pics/all that jazz in next month's exciting Zigzag.

'Every Day'

CLANCY (Warner Bros)

Nowhere near as good as Clancy are live, and streets behind Ernie Graham's brilliant 1970 solo album.

hold gigs are totally inappropriate for music - especially the sort of music I like to go and watch. I saw Horslips playing in a hall in Kingston, and there was a swimming pool underneath the floor! The sound was, of course, atrocious... and although that's an extreme example, there seem to be many similarly unsuitable venues - so much so, that I've really begun to appreciate halls designed for the benefit of music. Such places include the New Theatre in Oxford, where I saw IOcc, Guildford Civic Hall, where I saw the aforementioned Graham Parker, and the Hammersmith Odeon, where Emmylou won all our hearts again. The coda seems to be that if you go to a swimming bath, you shouldn't expect anything like a good sound. ...so beware!

The new Nils Lofgren LP, which I had the pleasure of hearing at the home of the most efficient and amusing Mr Kit Buckler of A&M, is going to be the one to finally plonk him in orbit. Up to now I've always felt that the excitement which surrounds Lofgren must be a result of his live performance and the people with whom he's played, but this record eclipses anything else he's ever done by miles. There's a really outstanding version of 'For your love', and lots of equally good new stuff, so start saving now!

On a more unpleasant note, I regret to report that my fabulous dog Elektra died a couple of weeks ago. Someone had given her some mutton bones, which inevitably became lodged in her stomach, and despite four operations, she didn't survive. Originally, she came from a litter produced by two of Frame's dogs (Fotheringay and Candyman), and she was the greatest dog ever. Most of the Zigzag staff are tremendously attached to dogs, and all dogs are great anyway - so make sure, if you have one, that it doesn't get fed indiscriminately. Life just wasn't the same with only one dog (the infamous Tiny Dancer), so we went to the local RSPCA and acquired a foolish animal who we have named Dingbat. If you ever want to get a dog, I earnestly suggest you check out the RSPCA, because it's quite heart-breaking to see the rows of unwanted dogs begging you to choose them. Dingbat, at the age of 14 weeks, had apparently had 4 previous homes already, and there is nothing at all wrong with him. The depressing Xmas syndrome of giving people dogs they don't want, or can't cope with, still exists. A depressing thought.

Now I must rush off to the big city. See you next time. John

I used to get drunk on vodka until I discovered Solution



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Friday 9th April — Marquee, London
Saturday 10th April — Wigan Casino
Sunday 11th April — Hemel Hempstead Pavilion
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Karl Dallas, Melody Maker

